HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK L. GRIGGS

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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St. Mary's Church, Nottingham, from the South-West.

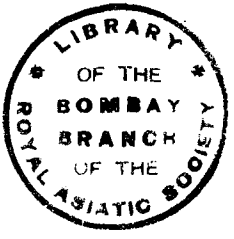
Highways and Byways

IN

Nottinghamshire

83856

BY J. B. FIRTH
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FREDERICK L. GRIGGS



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
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To

Her Grace,

WINIFRED

Duchess of Portland,

honoured, admired, beloved

throughout her county

of

Nottinghamshire.

PREFACE

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE is a pleasant county. Perhaps that distinguishing adjective may not wholly satisfy the local pride—which is strong—of its sons and daughters. But it is Fuller's adjective, and the wise old author of "The Worthies of England" chose his words with care. "The pleasantness thereof," said he, "may be collected from the plenty of noblemen, many having their Baronies and more their residence therein." That is still true, as when he wrote, and the district popularly known as the Dukeries contains within small compass the finest cluster of stately mansions, noble parks and ancient woodland that England has to show.

There are, indeed, no hills, dales and moors to compare in wild beauty with those of neighbouring Derbyshire. The swift and noble stream of Trent runs, not through deep and romantic limestone gorges, but through the broad pasture lands of wide valleys. Yet Nottinghamshire is rich in comely landscapes, and even in the least likely parts of the county you will continually come upon scenes of peaceful rural beauty that are very delectable to the eye, wherever Nature has not been defaced by the industrial invasion of mine or factory. Its main interest, however, lies in its two principal towns of Nottingham and Newark, in the Minster of Southwell—the Midland counterpart of Ripon and Wells—in its rich historical associations, especially in connection with the Civil War, in the romantic name of Byron, and in the glamour attaching to the great houses of the Forest of Sherwood and the noble families which have inhabited them. A good deal of family history, therefore, will be found in these pages, but it is not of a dryasdust or merely genealogical kind. I have only shaken the old family trees

to get the fruit down in the shape of interesting anecdote—personal, historical, literary or political, as the case may be.

It will, perhaps, be noticed that there are very few references throughout the book to the Great War, though a glowing chapter could well be written on the patriotic part which the men and women of the county have played therein. But the book was written before the war broke out, and alas! the war still rages as these words are added and still daily claims its heavy toll. I have thought it better, therefore, not to speak of the particular achievements of any particular Nottinghamshire family, town or village, for that could not be done without omitting others whose merit was no less. Let it suffice, then, to say that no county was found more ready, when the first call was sounded, to give freely of its very best for the great cause. Later on, when the victory is won and the record is complete, and the walls of the village churches receive their marble and bronze memorials, and the sunlight illumines the colours of the new glass, which will blazon their heroism to generations yet to come, it will be time enough to write in such a book as this of the local heroes of the Great War. I would only enter a strong plea that each parish church of Nottinghamshire shall have its worthy memorial—its enduring Roll of Honour.

My obligations are many. They extend to all who have written on the county—whether they have written well or ill—for I have gleaned industriously from all. And I would specially thank Mr. E. L. Guilford—himself the author of an admirable little book on the county—who read the proof-sheets and supplied me with many valuable suggestions.

J. B. FIRTH.

LONDON,
September, 1916.

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Sunrise on the Trent.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

CHAPTER I

NOTTINGHAM

NOTTINGHAM! Few towns or cities in England are better known or better liked than Nottingham. It challenges goodwill from a score of different approaches. It is associated through Robin Hood with the fables of childhood; it is linked through a long succession of heroes of the ring, the cricket field and the football arena with the sports of youth and manhood. "The famous town of Nottingham," as the old song had it, was honoured for the strength of its ale, for the size of its great market place, for the mystery of its caves and cave-dwellers, for the splendour of its Castle, for the untamed spirit of its Lambs, for the cheerful riot of Goose Fair, for the surplusage and good looks of its daughters.

Moreover, it was also long renowned for the remarkable beauty of its situation. In the old days the traveller approaching Nottingham from the south along the London road used to catch his first glorious view of the Trent valley from the top of Ruddington Hill. He saw spread below him a spacious plain through which the Trent pursued its rapid and capricious way,

spanned by the many-arched Trent Bridge. But for a mile on the other side of the river, right up to the foot of the hill crowned by the square tower of St. Mary's Church, the meadows stretched unbroken. They were mostly the common lands of the burgesses, and the high causeways bore witness to the fact that they were subject in winter to encroaching floods. Now the river has been tamed, and the railways have come, and streets and factories cover the meadows, and the rare beauty of the scene has departed, though even to-day the view from Ruddington Hill can hardly fail to impart its thrill. But Nottingham has now become an industrial centre, instead of being what it was for so many centuries, just the capital of a county and an important market town.

Industrial Nottingham does not concern us in these pages, though industry does not lack romance for those with a discerning eye. One might write of the craftsmen who have left a dim but imperishable memory behind them in the names of so many of the Nottingham streets, of the "kervers" in alabaster, much of whose honest work still survives in the little parish churches of the shire, of the stockingers, whose clattering machines clicked and rattled from morning to night, not in great factories, but in the homes of the people, heartily cursed and loathed by every boy of spirit, whose fate it was to be "bound" to a stockinger, and work long hours through a dreary apprenticeship, not of seven years only, but often of ten or eleven. Out of the stocking frame came the stocking machine and the great hosiery trade, and out of the stocking machine were developed the marvels of the lace machine and the three-headed lace trade, which perpetually mourns over the vagaries and instability of fashion. These mysteries have all their great names—Heathcoat, Levers, Hargreaves, Arkwright, and a score of others—but we have no room for them here.

And indeed, within the narrow compass of a few pages it is very difficult to deal with a city which has such a long history as Nottingham. There is the puzzle of its name and the curiosity of its caves cut in the soft sandstone, which fond travellers used to attribute to every other purpose than the obvious one. There is the faint record of its career in Saxon days and of its capture by the Danes when they came roaring and pillaging up the Trent and made this the chief of their five midland strongholds. The Dane gave way again to the Saxon, and

The South Prospect of Nottingham, with the Castle, &c. About 1750.

Saxon yielded to Norman, and the Normans thought so much of Nottingham and settled such a strong colony there, that the town was divided into two boroughs, the English and the French —a division which lingered as late as 1714. The English borough clustered round St. Mary's; the other two parishes of the town were French, and a dividing wall down the great market place apportioned to each its share. The Castle on its high rock just outside the town was a royal castle, where many an English sovereign held his Councils and his Parliament, and Nottingham grew in importance, partly as an appanage of the castle, and partly, of course, from its own favoured position on the Trent. The walled town was ringed round by common lands over which the burgesses alone had privileges, and not until 1845 was the Enclosure Act passed, which removed the fetters that had strangled its growth.

The Nottingham of to-day, created a city by Royal Charter in 1897, is a typical English town, casual and haphazard in design—save in the beautiful residential suburb which has grown up on the old park of the Castle—with few relics of antiquity in the shape of ancient buildings and houses, but possessing a noble market place, a stately parish church, and a superb possession in its once proud and royal castle. One modern town, however, is very like another; let us turn back a century or two and see what Nottingham looked like to the men of an earlier generation. "Nottingham," wrote a certain Richard Franck in 1658, "is no town but rather a beautiful and embellished Seraglio . . . our Northern Star." Or take another description, written in 1675, when the Happy Restoration was in full blast, and the Duke of Newcastle was building his sumptuous residence on the site of the ruinous castle:—

"To give you a little character of Nottingham, it may be called, as a man may say, Paradise Restored, for here you find large streets, fair built houses, fine women, and many coaches rattling about, and their shops full of all merchantable riches. As to the situation of it, it is upon a pleasant rock of freestone, in which every one that will may have cellars, and that without the trouble of springs or moisture, so that, excepting Bridgenorth in Shropshire, you cannot find such another town in England. It is divided into the upper and lower towns, for when you have a mind to leave the large and more spacious parts of this towne, on the plain of the hill, and will go down

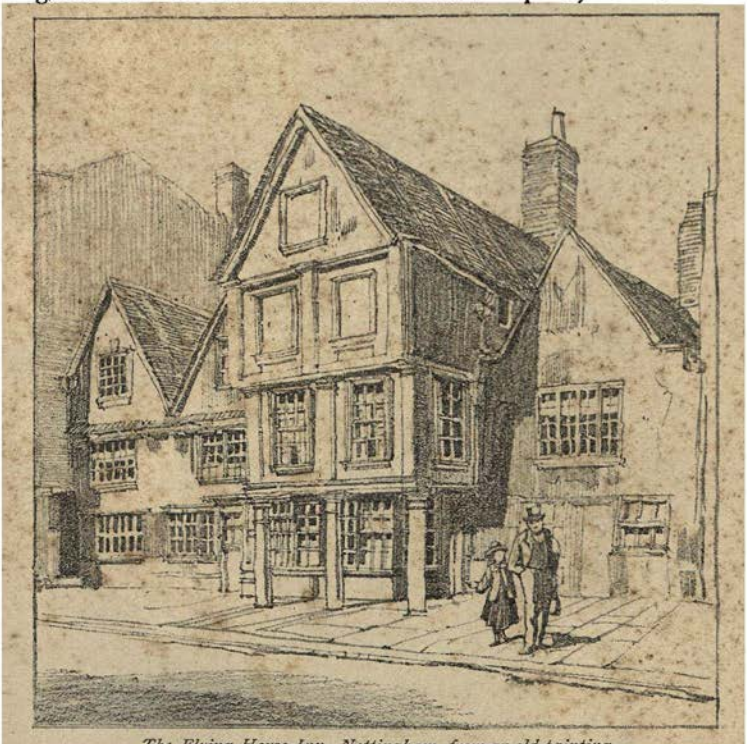
to the lower streets near the river, you must descend down right many stairs ere you get to the bottom, and here you find as it were another town full of shops and people, who have a convenience to cut in the rock warehouses, stables, or what rooms else they please for their own peculiar uses. This town hath in the upper part of it a large and long market place.

"For public buildings here are four pillars with many stairs to ascend each of them, and three churches, one of them bigger than the rest, in which they are now putting up an organ; but that which will yet add a greater beauty and ornament to this town is the Duke of Newcastle's new building, a sumptuous house in the ruins of old Nottingham Castle, whose walls were demolished by the Parliamentarian and Oliverian people. This house is seated on a rock extending itself towards the river so far as the land will permit, where such as have a mind from this high precipice may tumble headlong into the river Trent many yards beneath it. They have got up this building as high as the first story, having in it a noble staircase, each stair being made of one large entire stone, brought hither from Mansfield, carried up as to form in a large square without any pillars to support it, each stair geometrically depending one upon another.

"For wine here in this town there is good claret, white wine and Rhenish, but as to sack I cannot say much. I believe there are about half a dozen taverns."

A word or two of comment on the above is required. The river Trent does not flow beneath the Castle rock and never did. It was the river Leen which the writer saw far beneath him from the castle terrace, and the Leen itself has long since disappeared, diverted first for the Canal and then for the baser purposes of a main sewer. As for the half a dozen taverns, let us recall their names *in piam memoriam antiquorum potatorum*. They were the Black Moor's Head, the White Lion, the Flying Horse, the Ram and the King's Head, while the two principal ale-houses were the Punch-bowl and the Peacock in Peck Lane. Most of these are gone. The White Lion, at the east end of Long Row with an opening into Cow Lane (now Clumber Street) was in turn the headquarters first of the Tories and later of the Whigs, and had a complete cockpit installed in 1768. This was the inn where the London coaches drew up. It has long since vanished. Gone too is the old Black Moor's Head, which stood at the south-west corner of Pelham Street,

where Byron's body rested in state in a room built in a corner of the big courtyard. The inn was closed in 1830. These two ancient inns were sacrificed to necessary street improvements; and the Flying Horse, which still retains its picturesque old gables on the other side of the market place, is the sole



The Flying Horse Inn, Nottingham, from an old painting.

survivor of all its contemporaries. Earlier than any of these was the Bull's Head, where the genial Bishop Corbet stayed when he made his *Iter Boreale*, or northern journey, in 1620:

> The Bull-head is the word, and we must eat;
> Noe sorrow can descend so deep as meat;
> So to the inn we come, where our best cheer
> Was that his Grace of Yorke had lodged there.

He was objected to us when we call
Or dislike ought, "My Lord's grace" answers all;
"He was contented with this bed, this diet,"
That keeps our discontented stomachs quiet.

A Bishop quarrelling with meat and drink which had satisfied his Metropolitan is a pleasing picture of Caroline asceticism.

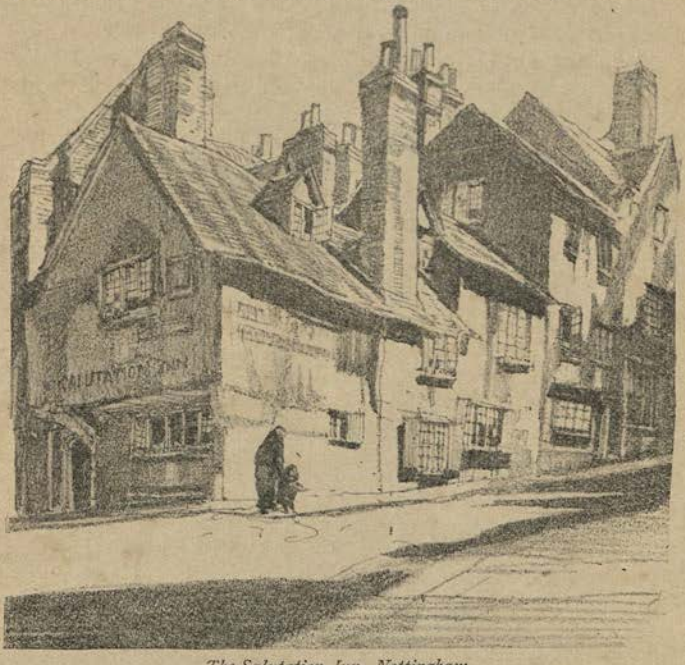
Let us take a later glimpse of Nottingham as seen through the keen eyes of two other clerical observers. John Wesley used to come to Nottingham occasionally in those restless evangelistic wanderings of his which did so much to redeem the lower classes of England from the state of heathendom into which they had been allowed to sink. Visiting Nottingham in 1741, he records that he preached to an immense multitude in the market place, and though the intervals between his visits were long, his societies quickly took root and flourished in a place where Dissent and Nonconformity had had a strong following for more than a century. So, thirty-five years later, in 1776, he enters in his "Diary":—

"There is something in the people of this town which I cannot but much approve of; although most of our Society are of the lower class, chiefly employed in the stocking manufacture, yet there is generally an uncommon sweetness and gentleness in their temper, and something of elegance in their behaviour, which, when added to solid vital religion, makes them an ornament to their profession."

Could local patriotism desire a more flattering testimonial? "Nottingham Lambs" of a surety!

A few years later, in 1782, Pastor Moritz visited the town. And who was Pastor Moritz? He was a Moravian minister who came to England to see the country, and being poor and a man of taste he walked through it, and the story of his wanderings and experiences gives a true and faithful picture of the habits of the people with whom he came into contact. The poor Pastor often had a rough time of it. English country-folk were intolerant then of foreigners. They suspected a foot-traveller who spoke broken English, and who did not first drink to the health of the company when he called for ale at a roadside alehouse. So Moritz was sometimes driven out of a village with curses when he asked for food—though he had money in his pocket—and he hardly seems to have been able to get a meal in peace all the way from Matlock to Nottingham. However,

Nottingham was hospitable to the stranger, and he was so delighted with all he saw that he wrote:—"This of all towns I have yet seen, except London, seemed to me one of the best, and it is undoubtedly the cleanest. Everything here wore a modern appearance, and a large place in the centre scarcely yielded to a London square in point of beauty. From the



The Salutation Inn, Nottingham.

town a charming footpath leads across the meadows to the high road, where there is a bridge over the Trent. Not far from this bridge was an inn, where I dined, though I could get nothing but bread and butter. Nottingham lies high, and made a beautiful appearance at a distance, with its lofty houses, red roofs and its glittering spires."

Only bread and butter! The Pastor had better have taken the precaution of dining before he set forth. But what a pretty

vignette he gives of the old town! One sees it all as in a dainty wood-cut, while the good man turns up the hill towards Ruddington on the way to Loughborough. He spent that night at Costock, where he found three inns, and had the ill-luck to choose one where the landlady was ill, and the only other guests were an ailing butcher and a sick carter. "It was like putting up at an hospital," he said, and he was glad to get away in the morning, "very depressed."

A much less flattering picture, however, of Nottingham is found in the "Eccentric Excursions" of G. M. Woodward, published in 1807. Woodward was a caricaturist of the Gillray school, who went to London, lived none too respectably, and died early of dissipation and debt. He wrote as though he knew Nottingham well, and he was pleased to be sarcastic. Perhaps he had found no honour in his own country:—

"A serenade from the harsh gratings of stocking frames; windmills as if purposely placed to frighten horses; deep roads of sand and heavy mud proclaim the approach to the town of Nottingham. Nearly a mile previous to the entrance at Chapel Bar the road is an absolute disgrace to that part of the country. There is scarcely a town in the kingdom which has been more celebrated for cleanliness by old writers, with so few real pretensions to the character given of it as Nottingham. The streets are in general covered with sludge of the blackest kind, which sable hue is principally extracted from the dust of coal carts, and on a rainy day the heads of the passengers are saluted with streams of water from long projecting spouts issuing from the tops of the houses. This public nuisance is most conspicuous in Bridle Smith Gate. The lighting and paving are articles which also require much improvement; at present these necessary conveniences in so large a town are principally confined to the streets inhabited by the wealthy Hosiers, whose proud mansions rise supremely eminent above the common remnants of the Stocking Manufactory."

The windmills referred to stood in a cluster on the plateau at the top of the Derby Road; and the bad road complained of was the highway from Derby near Lenton. As for the mud, other writers also condemned in scathing terms the sea of impassable sludge in the wide space by St. Peter's Church, which must have been most disagreeable to the occupants of the "proud mansions" in High Pavement and Castle Gate. Indeed,

one satirist roundly declared in amusing Macaronic verses that Nottingham's reputation for cleanliness was a fantastic fiction.

Non nisi confingam possum laudare Nottingham;
Gens foetet atque focus, sordidus ille locus.

Which he translates thus :—

I cannot without lye or shame
Commend the town of Nottingham ;
The people and the fewel stinke ;
The place is sordid as a sinke.

But satirists were calumniators ever. The amusing thing is that these lines moved a patriotic citizen to protest, "The people born in Nottingham are as clean-limbed, smooth-skinned and clear-complexioned as in any other place I know, Lancashire and Cheshire excepted."

Thou art and shalt be, Nottingham ! a fine town ;
Thou shalt stand glittering when all others fall down.

But to return to Woodward. He soon passes to a more atrocious slander :—

"Nottingham is famed for its eminent exposure to high winds and rich production of old maids. If the elderly ladies would recollect that they have passed their teens and support an appearance and conversation suitable to the dignity of their station, the voice of Satire would be silenced ; but when bordering on their grand climacteric, at which time wisdom is to be expected, they adopt the giddy manners of girls of sixteen, or blast by tea-table scandal the characters of blooming innocence ; 'tis then and then only they are reprehensible.

"As to the old maids of Nottingham, they are in many respects a very harmless race of beings, remarkably partial to stiff stays, umbrellas and striped great coats, and in general make a tolerable old-fashioned appearance, assembly nights and card-parties excepted, when a consultation at the milliners in the Long Row usually produces a long train and a few modish decorations by way of head-dress. Cards (that universal bane to rational conversation) engrosses the time of two-thirds of the inhabitants, and is the subject of their early thoughts and midnight slumbers ! "

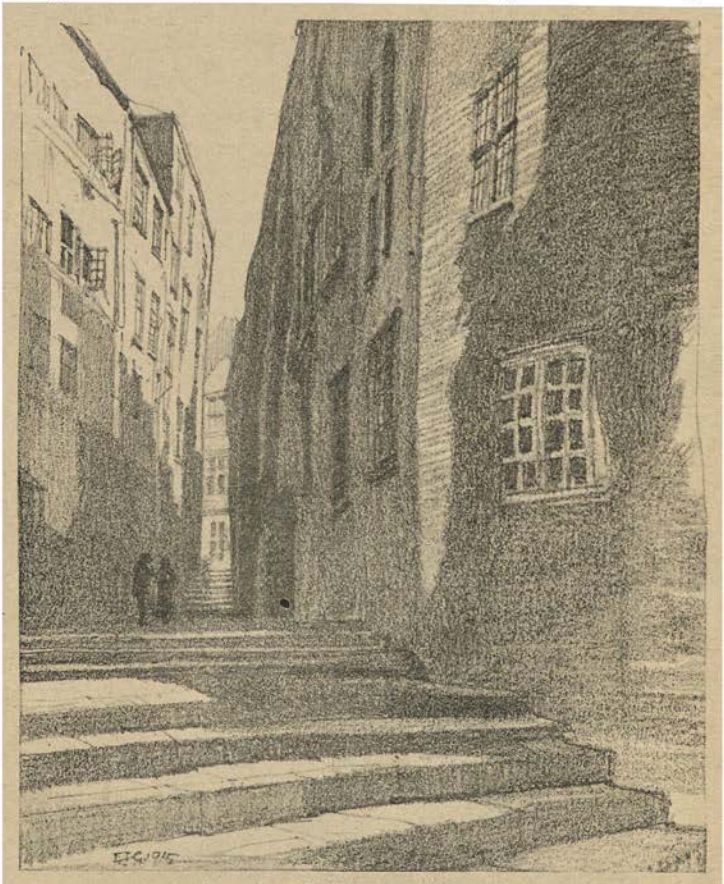
Haec est aerugo mera. This is sheer spite. Woodward must have been paying off old scores when he wrote, and the unkind attack on the ladies of Nottingham for an over-partiality to

spadille and whist comes with ill grace from one who died in a spunging house. Still there may have been some foundation for the charge. Similar things in more recent days have been

Houses in Castle Gate, Nottingham.

whispered of Bridge and Auction. The "Eccentric Excursions," however, is a very amusing book, and the caricatures of "A Nottingham Card Party" and "Pride and Exaltation in a Sedan Chair"—the latter depicting the supercilious supe-

riority of a turbaned lady in a Sedan chair on a wet night on the High Pavement, while less fortunate fellow-guests are making



Garner's Hill, Nottingham.

their wretched way along the rain-swept street with pattens and umbrellas—are admirable fooling and not too far removed from fact to make them wholly incredible.

As to the Assemblies—that word which conjures up so many withered flowers, faded glories, and forgotten pastimes—the Ladies' Assembly was held in a building on the north side of the Low Pavement, and was presided over by a Mistress of the Ceremonies, called a Queen. This building was repaired in 1807 at a cost of £1545, gathered by public subscription, and was voted so handsome that the holding of further concerts within its walls was forbidden by the Committee of Management. This was the Assembly of the polite and the *bon ton*. There was also a Tradesman's Assembly, held every third Tuesday of the month in the big hall of Thurland Hall, or Clare Hall, as it was sometimes called, which stood in the old Girdlesmith Gate.

The Poultry, Nottingham.

CHAPTER II

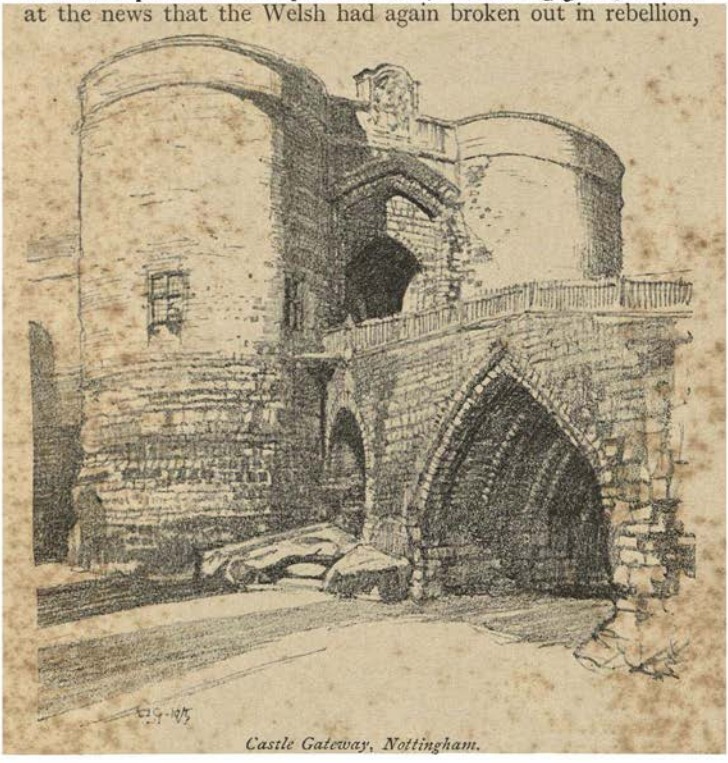
NOTTINGHAM CASTLE

NOTTINGHAM CASTLE is the pride of both city and county. It is to Nottingham what the Acropolis was to Athens or the Capitol to Rome. While the Castle rock stands—such is local feeling—so long will stand the fortune of the old town. Perhaps the sentiment is a little confused, but it is none the less genuine. The rock is of the softest sandstone, but crumble as it may it will still last for scores of centuries. The great feudal and royal castle which stood there from the Conqueror's time down to the Civil War is rather an odd object for democratic affection; the stately residence of the Newcastles which succeeded thereto was burnt down in a riot; and it is impossible to grow sentimental over a municipal museum. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Nottingham Castle is the holy place of local patriotism.

Little is left of the Castle which Leland described as he saw it in the days of Henry VIII. It was then at the height of its glory, for the work of the last royal builder, Richard III., was still comparatively fresh, and the great building, which even then had endured five centuries of architectural change and restoration, represented the last word in the blend of military stronghold and royal palace according to the ideas of the fifteenth century. A fragment of the ancient entrance gate with new stonework built around it, and portions of the outer walls and bastions still survive, while in the garden of a house in Castle Grove may be seen a fine fragment of one of the towers of the outer court built by Richard III., and a round well. Then there are the broad passages through the rock which led from the inner court down to the river Leen; and the line of the inner moat is still preserved in the dip of the ground. But with these exceptions the old feudal castle has vanished utterly,

and the building which now graces the Castle rock stands upon the foundations of the mansion of the Dukes of Newcastle.

It is impossible to attempt even an outline of the Castle's history. Suffice it to recall a few of the more outstanding events. The most pathetic took place in 1212, when King John, furious at the news that the Welsh had again broken out in rebellion,



Castle Gateway, Nottingham.

sent imperative orders to the Constable of Nottingham Castle to hang the twenty-eight Welsh boys who were being kept there in custody for their fathers' good behaviour. The messenger came. The order was obeyed. They took the boys at their play and despite their tears and entreaties for life, they hanged them over the walls—the most piteous sight that Nottingham

Castle ever exposed to the eye of Heaven. Yet even that barbarous deed seems to have aroused no storm of indignation. What was the good of taking hostages, people asked in those logical days, unless, if the occasion arose, you exacted the penalty?

A century later, in 1330, took place the famous seizure of Roger Mortimer, Earl of March. He was the paramour of Queen Isabella, widow of Edward II., during the minority of the young king Edward III. The latter, chafing under the insolent and galling domination of the favourite, entered into a plot for his overthrow while the Parliament was being held at Nottingham and the Queen Mother and Mortimer were in residence at the Castle. The plot leaked out, and the King and his friends were closely questioned, but all stoutly denied knowledge of the conspiracy, save William de Montacute, who stood upon his dignity and declared that he would return a sharp answer to anyone who accused him of treason. The account of what followed we take from the "Scalacronica" of Sir Thomas Gray, in Sir Herbert Maxwell's translation:—

"The Council having been dissolved, the said William said to the King that it were better to eat the dog than that the dog should eat them; so he advised him to speak to the Constable of the Castle, charging him upon his oath and allegiance to keep the plan secret, and directing him to leave a postern open to the park that very night, and warning him that if he did not do so, he, the king, would cause him to be hanged so soon as he should have the upper hand. The said William arranged with his comrades to assemble by night at a certain thicket in the park to which all should come, but they missed the trysting-place except the said William de Montacute and John de Neville, with five and twenty men who kept their appointment well.

"They were afraid that their comrades might miss them, and they durst not sound a call because of the sentries in the Castle, and so, as bold and enterprising men, they declared that as the matter had gone so far, they would risk the adventure by themselves. They went forward and found the postern open, as the king had commanded. They entered the Castle and mounted the stairs of the second court without meeting anybody, for it was mirk night, and the followers of the (gentle) folk had left the Castle for their lodgings. The Queen, Mortimer,

and their confidential adherents were holding a Council to take measures against the plot which had been discovered to them. They (the conspirators) entered the hall where the Queen was sitting in Council. The usher cried out at their entry. Hugh de Turpington, who was steward of the King's Household, but was of the Queen's party, rushed out of the Council and met them in the middle of the hall, crying, 'Down with the traitors,' and made to strike the first of them with a dagger, when John de Neville ran him through the body and slew him and an esquire also who offered resistance.

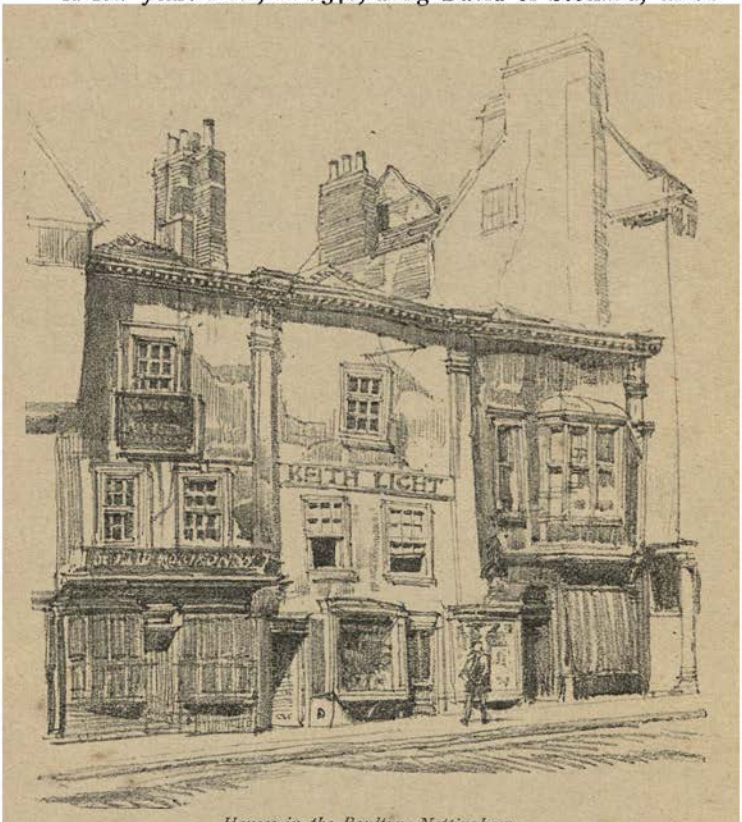
"Then they pressed forward into the chamber and seized Mortimer, and those whom they wished to have, so that before dawn none remained in the town save those who were of the King's party, who had armed themselves when the conspirators entered the castle."

Such is the story as told by one who was almost a contemporary of the event, and all accounts agree that the conspirators were introduced by the Constable into the Castle by a subterranean and secret way. The question therefore arises which was the secret passage referred to, and it soon becomes evident that the stairway up to the terrace, which bears the name of Mortimer's Hole, cannot have been the passage in question. For it is clear from Gray's statement that the conspirators issued in the open and in the outer court, while the so-called Mortimer's Hole communicates with the broad passage way which led down to Brewhouse Yard and the bank of the river Leen. The postern into the park was situated beyond doubt in the dry ditch under the castle wall, and a hole giving entrance into the passage—long since blocked up—may be seen in one of the Castle Grove gardens. This is confirmed by a manuscript of the Rev. John Lambe (born in Nottingham in 1685), which says:—"The place always showed for Mortimer's Hole when I was a boy (*i.e.*, between 1692 and 1700) was on the left side of the way to Lenton in a narrow bottom between two hilly rocks, upon one of which, almost over against the great yard of the Castle to the north, there stands a poor cottage, sometime an alehouse. It is a little way before the entrance to the park along the footway to Lenton." Lambe very frankly acknowledges that others were of a different opinion, but the evidence of the "Scalacronica," which this fits so perfectly, is conclusive.

Mortimer, it may be added, despite the Queen's tearful

entreaty, "Fair son, have pity on the gentle Mortimer," was carried to London, thrown into the Tower, and then dragged at the horse's tail to the gallows at Tyburn.

A few years later, in 1346, King David of Scotland, taken



Houses in the Poultry, Nottingham.

prisoner at Neville's Cross, was imprisoned in Nottingham Castle, but the story of his inhabiting a dungeon for eleven years is foolish fiction. Kings were not kept in dungeons. During the Wars of the Roses Edward IV. lived in state at

the Castle, and began the important alterations completed by Richard III. The latter's successor, Henry VII., marched hence with his army to the prosperous field of East Stoke, but afterwards the castle seems to have been allowed to fall into neglect, and James I. gave it to the Earl of Rutland. When, a few years later, Charles I. came to Nottingham in order to raise his Standard, the Castle was so little a place of residence that he lodged in the town at Thurland Hall.

The Raising of the Standard is the most picturesque and epoch-making event in the Castle's history. Nottingham was doubtless chosen by the King because of its central position and strategic importance, and because the gentry of the county were preponderantly Royalist. Doubtless, also, the Earl of Newcastle pressed the suitability of Nottingham as a rendezvous, and so in the proclamation issued at York on August 12, Charles called on his friends to meet him at Nottingham on August 22. As for the actual occurrence, we cannot do better than quote a contemporary account :—

"Monday, being the 22nd day of August, in the morning, his Majesty left his forces before Coventry and rode to Leicester, where he dined that day at the Abbey House. Presently after dinner the king again took horse and with his company rode to Nottingham, where was great preparation for the setting up of the Standard that day, as was formerly appointed. Not long after the king's coming to the town the Standard was taken out of the Castle and carried into a field a little on the back side of the Castle wall. The likeness of the Standard is much after the fashion of the city streamers used at the Lord Mayor's Show, having about twenty supporters, and is to be carried the same way. On the top of it hangs a bloody flag, the king's arms quartered, with a hand pointing to the crown which stands above, with this motto, 'Give to Caesar his due.' Several knights bannerets were appointed to bear the Standard; likewise, there were three troops of horse appointed to wait upon the Standard and to bear the same backward and forward, with about 600 foot soldiers.

"It was conducted to the field in great state, his Majesty, the Prince and Prince Rupert going, along with divers other lords and gentlemen of his Majesty's train, besides a great company of horse and foot, in all to the number of about 2,000, who came more to see the manner of the thing than in any way

to offer assistance to his Majesty, as did afterwards evidently appear; for that, upon taking down the Standard, there were not more than 30 of the train bands that offered to come to his Majesty, which because their number was so inconsiderable, his Majesty refused to accept of. So soon as the Standard was set up, a herald-at-arms made ready to proclaim a proclamation, declaring the ground and cause of his Majesty setting up his Standard, namely, to suppress the pretended rebellion of the Earl of Essex, in raising forces against him, to which he requested the aid and assistance of all his loving subjects.

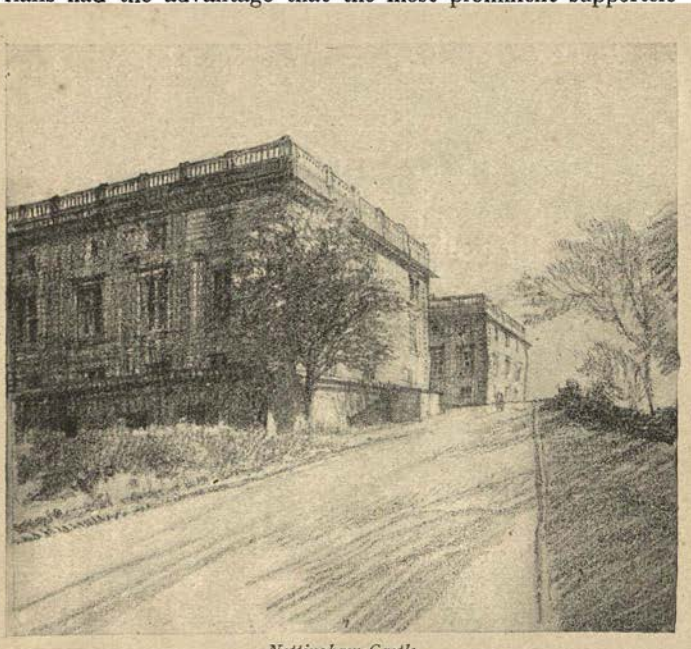
"But before the trumpets could sound, his Majesty called to view the proclamation, which being given him, he privately read the same over to himself, and seeming to dislike of some passages therein, called for pen and ink, and with his own hand, crossed out and altered the same in divers places (a thing well worthy of notice) and then gave it to the herald who proclaimed the same to the people, though with some difficulty after his Majesty's corrections. After reading whereof, the whole multitude threw up their hats shouting with other expressions, 'God save the King.'

"Not long after the reading of the proclamation, it being toward night, the Standard was taken down and again carried into the Castle, with the like state as it was brought into the field; and the next day it was again set up and his Majesty came along with it and made proclamation as the day before; and the like also was done on Wednesday, his Majesty being also present. But since then it hath been set up with less ceremony, there not being 100 present, as are yet heard of, who have offered themselves to his Majesty, since the first setting up of the Standard."

It is quite clear from the above that the Raising of the Standard was a deplorable fiasco. Other narratives say that it blew so hard that the Standard was actually thrown down, and that one of the King's gentlemen was so savage at the failure of the townsmen to support the cause that he muttered his desire to rout them out of their apathy at the point of the sword. The fact was that the majority of the principal people in Nottingham either sympathised with the Parliament, as did most of the commercial centres in England, or were waiting to see how events would shape. So they were very chary about committing themselves definitely, and Charles, in his bitter disappointment, reopened negotiations with the Parliament. When these

broke down he marched off to rejoin his forces in the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury. The place where the Standard was raised bears the name of Standard Hill to this day, and the precise spot will be found in the grounds of the General Hospital.

After Charles left Nottingham there was a long pause. Opinion in the town began to crystallise. The Parliamentarians had the advantage that the most prominent supporters

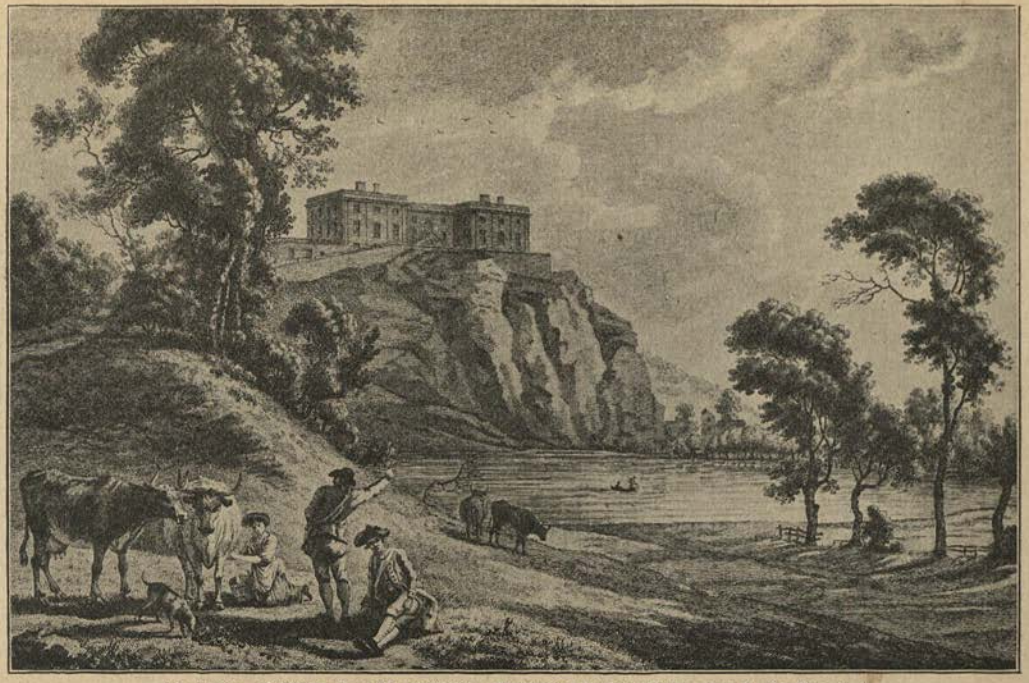


Nottingham Castle.

of the king in the county had gone off and joined his Majesty. The field was thus left open for John Hutchinson, of Owthorpe, to assume the lead of those who sided with the Parliament, and he and they decided to seize and hold Nottingham for the Parliament. Forming themselves into a local committee of defence, they garrisoned the Castle, threw up a few small forts in the meadows for the protection of the town, and awaited events. Thus easily was Nottingham seized, and though there

was a considerable party of Royalist "malignants," it is clear that the general feeling of the citizens was strongly in sympathy with the Parliament. Those who wish to read the full story of the part played by the Castle during the war, will find it, of course, told by Lucy Hutchinson, in her deservedly famous "Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson." These need to be read with caution, for this loyal wife would admit no blemish in the character of a husband who seemed to her the very pattern of courage, wisdom, godliness, and human perfection, and anyone who differed from or quarrelled with him was always a malignant, or an atheistical fellow, or a villain of desperate character. But still the main narrative is of extraordinary interest, because it shows how exceedingly insecure the Governor's tenure of the Castle really was all through the war, how weakly it was held, what dissensions and jealousies divided the garrison, and how almost at any time, if a serious and sustained attempt had been made, Nottingham could have been taken and the Castle stormed.

In September, 1643, Sir Richard Byron and 600 Newarkers surprised the town, and for five days kept Hutchinson close within his defences. But they did not venture on a storm, and withdrew at the approach of reinforcements from Derby. Again, in the following January, a large force of 3,000 Royalists from Newark, suddenly appeared before the town, after spreading the false rumour that they were intending an attack on Sleaford. A thousand men under Sir Charles Lucas entered the streets, but were ignominiously driven out in a panic by a sudden charge, and the enterprise ended in complete failure. Several later attempts were made to seize the fort and bridge at Trent Bridge—on one occasion by a small party disguised as market-women—and in April, 1645, the Bridge actually was surprised and captured and most of the guard put to the sword, "notwithstanding desire of quarter"—a piece of brutality which was repaid with interest at the storm of Shelford. But the position was always this, that if the Newarkers took the bridge they could not hold it, because a sufficient levy from the counties round about was immediately got together to retake it, and yet the Nottingham garrison never made any attempt to capture the small garrisons at Shelford and Wiverton until the very close of the war. From beginning to end Nottingham and Newark maintained their relative positions. The former



West View of Nottingham Castle (1776). Engraving by W. Watts, after P. Sandby, R.A.

provided the Parliament with a tolerably safe crossing over the Trent and the latter did the same for the Royalists.

After the Civil War Nottingham Castle passed into the hands of the Duke of Buckingham, whose mother had inherited it from the last Earl of Rutland, and the Duke sold it, in 1674, to the Duke of Newcastle. He pulled down what remained of the old castle, and set about building a splendid residence according to the taste of his time. A fragment—much injured by the fire of 1831—of the Duke's equestrian statue, cut from a single block of stone, is still to be seen in situ over one of the doorways to the Castle. But the succeeding Dukes of Newcastle soon abandoned Nottingham Castle as a place of residence. As early as 1720, they gave up keeping deer in the park, and the fishponds gradually choked with mud. In 1792 barracks were built in one corner of the park, and continued down to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Corporation in its wisdom petitioned against a renewal of the lease on the ground that barracks were prejudicial to the morals of the town. So that particular source of contamination was transferred to Derby! By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Castle was dismantled. Part was occupied as a young ladies' boarding school; part was even let as lodgings to favoured tenants; and part was used as an armoury for the militia. Visitors to the town described the chilly depression of the "dreary uninhabited apartments," and one of the tenants spoke of "the funny appearance of a spoonful of furniture and a pocket handkerchief of a carpet in a room 60 feet long."

Nottingham Castle, therefore, was a melancholy abode of departed grandeur when the rioters set fire to it during the Reform troubles of 1831, though the rejection of the Reform Bill was rather the excuse and the occasion, than the cause of the uprising of the mob. Those who burnt Nottingham Castle were demonstrating not so much that they wanted the vote—the Reform Bill was not going to enfranchise them—as that they were against an unpopular Government and against dear food and heavy taxes, and above all that they were against machinery and the intolerable hardships of the new industrial system.

Pickford's Van brought the news to Nottingham at half-past eight one Saturday night that the House of Lords had rejected the Reform Bill. The tidings quickly spread, and on Sunday morning a crowd collected outside the White Lion to await

the arrival of the London coach. When this drove up, one of the passengers shouted that the Reformers were beating to arms in London. Cheers were raised, and stones began to fly against the windows of some of the leading anti-Reformers. The crowds grew denser; attacks were made on private houses; the Riot Act was read, and the Hussars cleared the streets without any violent collision. Next morning a huge meeting in the market place passed off tolerably well, but the magistrates swore in hundreds of special constables in expectation of serious trouble. Nor was it long in coming, for several mobs seem to have started off to riot on their own separate account—one pillaging a flour mill on the Forest, another marching to Sneinton and Colwick, and another attacking the castle. Forcing an entrance, the rioters set fire to the castle in several places, and by seven o'clock, the flames were leaping from the windows. Thousands of people thronged the Castle Yard in the pouring rain to watch the spectacle. The Hussars came but went away again, for the people were simply absorbed in the grandeur of the sight, and at midnight the multitude quietly dispersed.

On the following day the mob formed up near the barracks. The Hussars came out and scattered them, and a considerable body marched off to Beeston, where they burnt Mr. Lowe's silk mill. Then, retracing their steps, they reached the lodge of Wollaton Park at the junction of the Beeston and Derby roads, and forced the gates, but were immediately charged by a troop of Wollaton Yeomanry, who were protecting the Hall, driven back, and sixteen were taken prisoners. As they retreated towards Nottingham they were met by another squadron of Hussars and the Riot Act was again read, but either the numbers were too great or the soldiers were so ineffectually handled that it was only with the greatest difficulty that the prisoners were conveyed to the gaol. Meanwhile, the business of the town was at a complete standstill; the shops were kept closed, and the Mayor issued an order requiring all the inhabitants to remain within doors after five o'clock. This had a good effect and, as the streets were patrolled by the soldiers and strong bodies of special constables, the rioters soon melted away.

On the Wednesday everything was quiet, except for a few cases of arson in the neighbouring villages, and it only remained to try the prisoners. A Special Commission of Assize

was appointed, and the Judges sentenced five to death and four to transportation. Two of the five were afterwards respited; but in spite of a petition to the House of Commons, signed by 17,000 persons, the other three were publicly hanged before a crowd of ten thousand persons. Hearson, one of the victims —for his guilt was obviously no greater than that of hundreds of others—was well known in the local prize-ring. He sprang up the steps, in spite of his chains, on to the platform with great agility, and waved his cap and black handkerchief, and danced about as though he were in the ring. Then he took an orange from his pocket and threw it towards St. Mary's Church. "It fell short," says the contemporary chronicler, "but a lad ran in and caught it." That curious little incident stands out with extraordinary vividness in the accounts of the execution. No doubt the crowds were kept back by a strong cordon of soldiers and constables, and there was a wide, clear space between the platform and the people. One can see the quick-eyed boy dash out from the line and catch the orange as it fell, and hear the sudden laugh that would rise from the watching multitudes. But a still stranger incident is recorded. The authorities allowed the condemned men an outfit of black coats and waistcoats, white trousers, white gloves, and black neckerchiefs. As the melancholy procession moved towards the scaffold, one of those about to suffer discovered that he had two odd gloves, and he stopped and insisted that the mistake should be rectified. Fancy troubling about odd gloves within fifty yards of the drop and ten minutes of eternity!

Such was the fate of Nottingham Castle, and its indignant owner, the Duke of Newcastle, was very ill-content with the £21,000 which was awarded to him as damages. Yet he really fared not at all amiss, for the place was useless to him as a residence, and he had already begun to let plots for building on the edge of the park. In 1878, a later Duke gave the Castle to the town that it might be converted into a Museum, and Nottingham is thus favoured in its Museum and Art Gallery beyond all provincial cities. It has been a strange, eventful history, this slow development from Royal Castle to Municipal Museum, but no one who stands on its broad terrace and looks over the intervening confusion to the green hills beyond and the woods of Clifton Grove will deny the happy ending.

Nottingham Castle.
From an engraving by E. Finden, from a drawing by W. Westall, A.R.A.

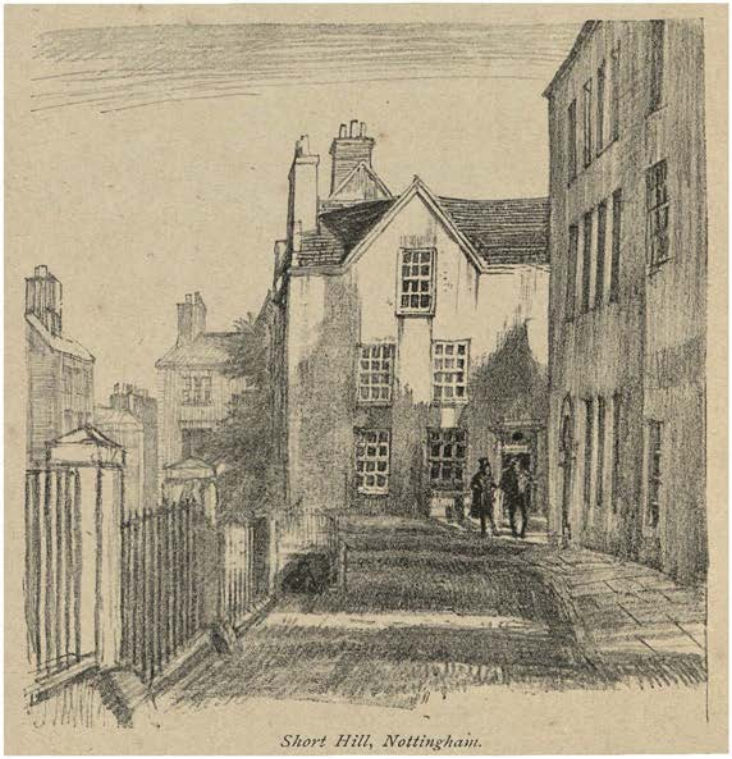
CHAPTER III

NOTTINGHAM MARKET PLACE; ST. MARY'S CHURCH; CRICKET AT TRENT BRIDGE; LENTON; WOLLATON HALL

NEXT in public interest to the Castle stands the Market Place, the largest of its kind in England, having at one end the Exchange or Town Hall—an unpretentious and uninteresting building, which is likely to be replaced before long by another more consonant with the dignity of the City. The Long Row, on the north side, is still the principal shopping centre of Nottingham and a few of the old gables and pillared projections, which used to offer a dry passage in all weathers, still remain. The South Parade on the other side, once known as Timber Hill, had a row of trees in front of it in the eighteenth century, and where Queen Victoria's statue now stands was the Malt Cross, a relic of the days when Nottingham was full of crosses, such as Week Day Cross, Hen Cross and many others. The broad streets leading out of Long Row are of quite recent date; in the olden days only narrow lanes broke its uniform line.

Nottingham Market Place is a scene of cheerful bustle on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when the whole great square is covered with booths, and for three days every October it is given over to the jovial riot of Goose Fair—a festival known far and wide

throughout England. This is of very respectable antiquity, for the earliest reference to it is dated 1541, and in those spacious Tudor times the fair lasted for fifteen days. But Goose Fair was then a serious market as well as holiday, and even as late as 1766 a riot started in the cheese section because the dairymen asked 28*s*. to 30*s*. per cwt. for their produce—to the just indig-



Short Hill, Nottingham.

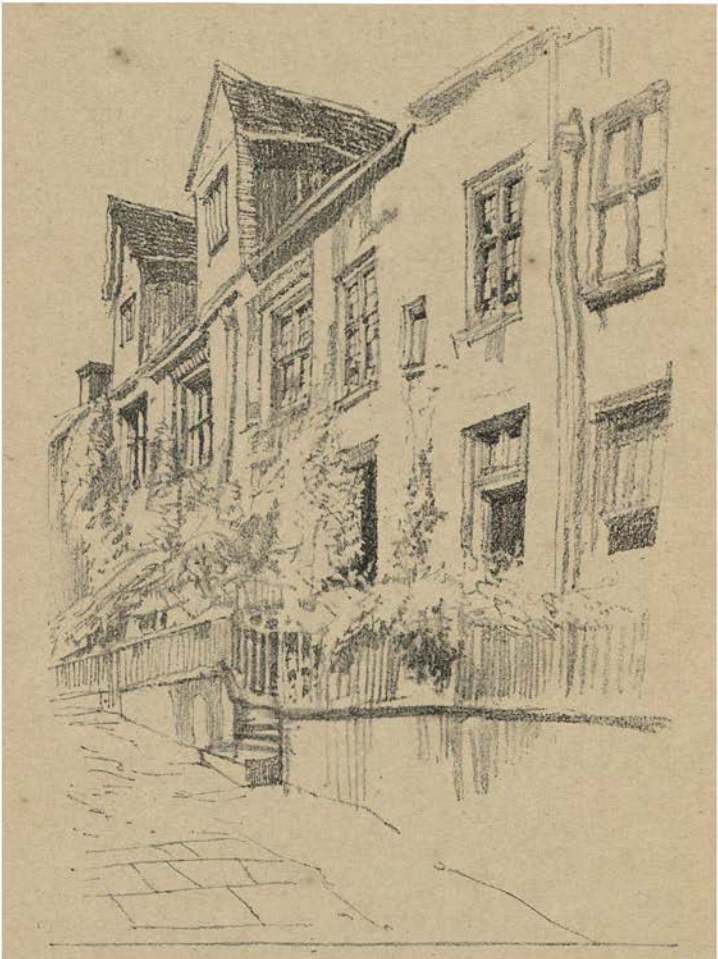
nation of the citizens. The Mayor was felled to the ground by a cheese, and the 15th Light Dragoons had to be called upon to restore order. Now there is no pretence of business at Goose Fair. It is simply a carnival of amusement, and the square is filled with travelling roundabouts, shows, menageries, and

boxing booths. The din is indescribable; the pandemonium appalling. For three whole days and nights the Market Place is given up to jostling, pushing, shouting throngs. There is plenty of horse-play and "mafficking," but the merry-makers enjoy it, and the fastidious can keep away. Goose Fair is not a very creditable example of English manners; the blatant, raucous voice of the steam organ gives the note of the whole assembly; but it is a highly cherished institution in Nottingham, and it will die hard.

Before we leave the Market Place, a word must be said of the election scenes which used to take place there in the days of the hustings and open voting. The hustings were erected in front of the Exchange, and many a round cobble-stone of the pavement has been torn up and sent hurtling through the air in lieu of argument. Lord Broughton, the friend of Byron, who, as Mr. J. C. Hobhouse, was elected for Nottingham, in 1834, has left an amusing account of the manner in which his election was conducted. He refused to canvass or give any pledges, and in his address simply referred to his past life and his resolution to do his duty. He was being opposed by a Mr. Eagle.

"The nomination took place in the Exchange Rooms. A murderer was executed in the morning, and the crowd which attended that spectacle adjourned afterwards to our exhibition.

"The clock struck twelve and Mr. Eagle's proposer began his speech. He was not very rude, but the seconder, a Mr. Boothby, an ironfounder, made the most insolent attack that ever had been made upon me, who had heard so much of that sort of eloquence. He accused me of every political crime—apostasy, business, love of place, love of money, cruelty, and what not—besides telling the meeting that my wife's sisters, whom he called my sisters, were pensioners upon the public. All this I bore patiently, because obliged to bear it; only once or twice I said, 'That is false.' The fellow went on reading charges against me from the *True Sun*, and treating me as the worst of political delinquents. Neither Lord Rancliffe, who proposed, nor Mr. Wakefield, who seconded me, were heard at all. I experienced the same treatment. I pulled out my watch and said I would give them five minutes to become silent. This had no effect, and the Assessor then put the question to the electors. The great majority in the body of the hall was certainly for Eagle; on the hustings about 200 hands were held up for me, and away we came.



Friar Yard, Nottingham.

"The election lasted two days, and at the close of the poll I had a majority of 1,025. The decision was announced in silence, when the patriot Eagle exclaimed, 'What, not a greasy ruffian

to throw up his hat?' He, the day before, had called my supporters ragamuffins, and said that nine-tenths of them were drunk. I believe one-twentieth of them were so; and my impression then was that although the whole constituency was far inferior to that of Westminster, yet there were two or three hundred highly spirited, independent men, as intelligent and well-mannered as any to be found in the kingdom."

Compared with some other elections, this was a comparatively humdrum affair. In 1818, and again in 1820, the Tory candidate had been that redoubtable sportsman and foxhunter,

Friar Lane, Nottingham.

Mr. Tom Assheton Smith. When he came to Nottingham for the election he found the town placarded with "No Foxhunting M.P." and his Whig opponents dressed up a guy with a red-coat and fox's brush attached to it and burnt it before the hustings. Moreover, they made such a din when Smith rose to speak that he could not be heard. That nettled him, and at last he shouted in a voice which rose above the clamour, "Gentlemen, as you refuse to hear the exposition of my political principles, at least be so kind as to listen to these few words. I will fight any man, little or big, directly I leave the hustings, and will have a round with him now for love." The effect of these words was instantaneous. Smith was subjected

to no more interruption, and after a contest of eleven days was only beaten by Lord Rancliffe by the narrow margin of twelve votes. He gave the Whigs such a shaking that two years later, when he stood again, they only won by getting the Nottingham Corporation to create a batch of mushroom voters for the purpose of the election—for which act of corruption the Corporation was expressly censured by Lord Althorp when he introduced the Reform Bill.

In later years, when Mr. Bernal Osborne and Sir Robert Clifton were at the height of their glory, the Nottingham Lambs displayed surprising pugnacity, and the stimulating qualities of Nottingham ale acted magically upon the passions of the free and independent electors. The electoral history of Nottingham would make a pretty chapter by itself—not without mingled romance and squalor even in these latter days. But bribery, in our squeamish times, has become a matter of legal definition.

Let us pass to a safer theme—the churches. The old churches of Nottingham are three in number, nor was it till early in the nineteenth century that the incumbents of the three ancient parishes had to be compelled by Act of Parliament—there were fees at stake—to submit to the intrusion of a fourth in the extra-parochial district of Standard Hill. St. Nicholas, near the Castle, is a brick building completed in 1682. The older fabric had been destroyed during the Civil Wars by the Governor of the Castle, because the enemy on one occasion had vexed the garrison by firing from its steeple. At the rectory Gilbert Wakefield was born in 1756. He describes, in his fascinating "Autobiography," how his father, who had been a curate at the parish church for four or five years, got the living in 1749.

"When St. Nicholas in Nottingham, which is in the gift of the Crown, became vacant, my father went up immediately to the Duke of Newcastle, then Prime Minister, with a recommendatory testimonial from the Corporation of Nottingham. This monument, however, of the good opinion of that fraternity seemed to operate but feebly on the propensities of his Grace who asked the petitioner if he had no other friends to recommend him. My father mentioned, besides, John Plumptree, Esq., Member for the town, who also interfered on this occasion, and his Grace of Canterbury. 'That,' said the Duke, 'is powerful interest, indeed.' My father lost no time in going to Lambeth, was immediately acknowledged by the noble primate (Dr.

Herring) who ordered his coach that instant, carried the country curate to the Minister, and obtained the living for him."

Gilbert Wakefield took orders, but after a few years he began to lean towards Arianism, and it was remarked of him that he abhorred the idea of the Trinity only less strongly than he detested Greek accents. While he lived at Bramcote in 1783, he sought to eke out his narrow means by taking pupils, but he only secured one, and in 1785 he was back in Nottingham in order to be near the library. In 1790 he removed to Hackney, and it was not till then that he sprang into fame as a controversialist of great learning and extraordinary pugnacity. Wakefield preached a few times in Nottingham, but his orthodoxy was suspect even from his earliest days.

St. Peter's Church, a little to the south of the Market Place, has a dignified interior which is in sharp contrast with its dismal outside, but the pride of the city is the mother church of St. Mary's, whose grand tower is nobly set upon the hill, which was once the very acropolis of Nottingham. It is now surrounded by the warehouses of the lacemen and by some wretched slums which ought to be cleared away for the credit of the City, and it requires a strong effort to conjure up the old church as it was when the great mansion and the gardens of Plumptree House were at the height of their glory, and the High Pavement was the chief residential quarter of the town. The street at the east side of the churchyard still testifies by its name of Stoney Street to its Roman origin, and it came winding up the steep Hollow Stone from the level meadows of the Leen and Trent, and passed out through Broad Street on its way north.

St. Mary's Hill was the nucleus of the town of Nottingham, and the old church still stands unchanged while everything around it is in a state of perpetual flux. It is a magnificent cruciform building with rather shallow transepts, and a spacious but plainer chancel, which has recently been widened by the addition of a south aisle. Most of the present building dates from the middle of the fifteenth century, and its chief feature is its beautiful windows. The church, indeed, like so many others of its period, gives the impression of being enclosed not so much by walls as by windows, the stone tracery of which is better than the stained glass. The best glass is found in the windows near the south porch, set up in memory of the officers and men of the various Nottinghamshire regiments who fell in the South African War.

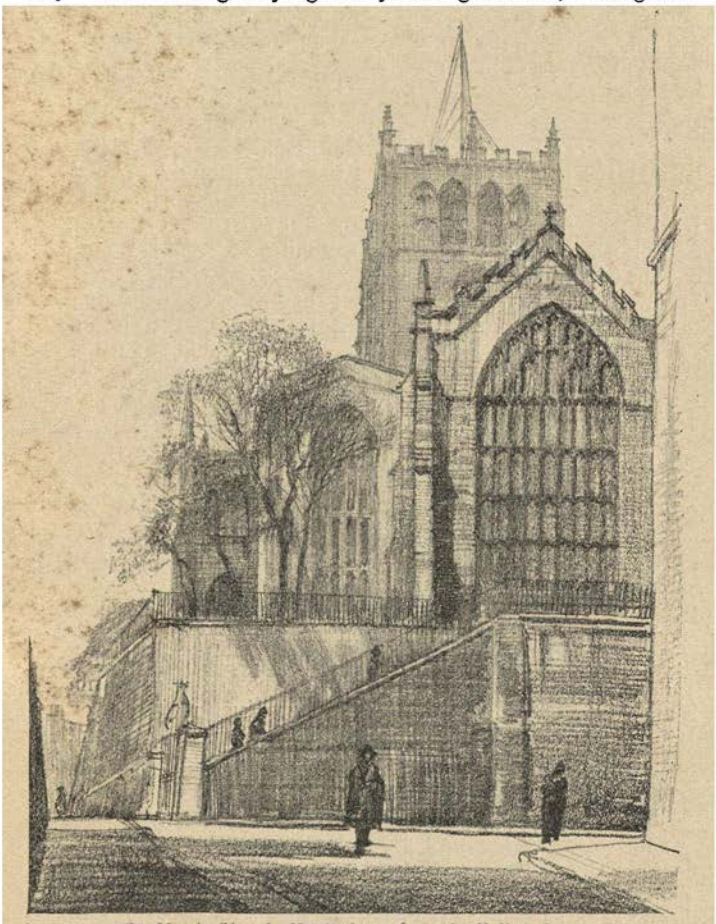
The monuments are decidedly disappointing. In the south transept is a poor tablet commemorating the Earls of Clare. It was put up in 1804—"*pro alio multum mutilato*"—and two shields of armorial bearings, fragments of the ancient marble, were added just to indicate what had been lost. These Earls of Clare, whom we shall meet at Houghton, were the heads of the prosperous Holles family who lived at Thurland Hall. The first Earl, who died in 1637, had a strange premonition of his death. As he was leaving church the Sunday before he fell ill, he "suddenly stept (taking his lady with him) into a place in the church where, laying the end of his staff upon the ground, he said, 'In this place will I be buried.'" And so it was, for he became ill soon after, and the famous Dr. Plumptre could do him no good. "He gave him physic, but it never wrought," says the family chronicle. Cross to the opposite transept and you will find some monuments of the Plumptres who endowed the hospital which still flourishes in the purlieus of the Hollow Stone. The most interesting is that of young Henry, who died, in 1718, at the age of 10, "to a great degree master of the Jewish, Roman and English Histories, the Heathen Mythology and the French tongue and was not inconsiderably advanced in the Latin." The worthy Doctor who attended the Earl of Clare, wrote various Latin epigrams and poems on Nottingham, and that he had his full share of local pride and prejudice let the following barbarous couplet show:—

Quis positum aetherio caelum miretur Olympo
Qui positam novit monte Notinghamiam?

He is said by Holles to have been "a profest Atheist," and Lucy Hutchinson disliked and distrusted him. But neither evidence is conclusive, for he was on the other side in politics.

Much more might be written about the part which St. Mary's has played in the history of Nottingham, and about those who lie buried within its precincts. But I will content myself with only one other reference. It relates to a visit which the Quaker Fox paid to the town in 1649. He describes in his Diary how while walking to Nottingham with some Friends to attend a meeting, he came to the top of a hill and espied the noble tower of St. Mary's. Did the sight give him joy? Not a bit of it. It set all his quiet fanaticism ablaze in a second. But let him tell the story himself:—

"I espied the great steeple-house; and the Lord said unto me, 'Thou must go cry against yonder great idol, and against



St. Mary's Church, Nottingham, from the Hollow Stone.

the worshippers therein.' So I said nothing of this to the Friends that were with me, but went on with them to the meeting, where

the mighty power of the Lord was among us; in which I left Friends sitting in the meeting and I went away to the steeple-house. When I came there, all the people looked like fallow ground, and the priest (like a great lump of earth) stood in his pulpit above. He took for his text these words of Peter, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.' And he told the people that this was the Scripture by which they were to try all doctrines, religions, and opinions. Now the Lord's power was so mighty in me and so strong in me that I could not hold but was made to cry out and say, 'Oh, no, it is not the Scriptures,' and I told them what it was, viz., the Holy Spirit. . . . As I spoke thus among them, the officers came and took me away, and put me into a nasty, stinking prison; the smell whereof got so into my nose and throat that it very much annoyed me."

What comment is possible on such an occurrence or on such a state of mind? The folly of sinners is easily reproved, but who shall reprove the folly of saints?

There are not many old houses of interest left in Nottingham, considering Pococke's statement in 1751 that "Nottingham begins to be much frequented by gentlemen, some who retire to it from their country houses, others who have left over trade, and many gentlemen of the neighbourhood have houses here for the winter." Willoughby House on the High Pavement, a good brick mansion, with old iron gates and railings, is one of these; Newdigate House at the top of Castlegate, where Marshal Tallard spent four years of exile after the battle of Blenheim, is another. But the most interesting survival of all is Bromley House, in Angel Row, just off the Market Place, which for nearly a century has been the dignified home of the Nottingham Subscription Library. This has a stately oak staircase with pannelled walls, and on the first floor is a series of handsome apartments with elaborately moulded ceilings, and fireplaces with pictures inset in the overmantels. The best of these is a very pleasing painting by Rawson Walker of Clifton Grove. A curious story attaches to this and to the portrait of Dr. Storer on the staircase by another Nottingham artist, named Barber. These two painters, wishing to join the library, but being short of cash, offered to present a picture in lieu of buying a share. They

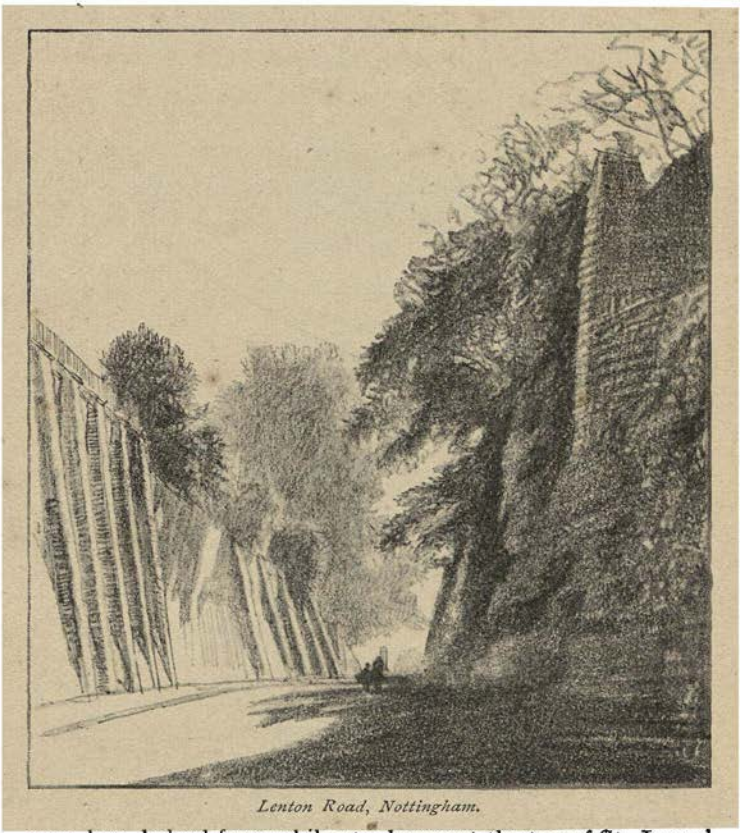
then thought they were free of the library for life. But the Committee insisted on their paying the usual annual subscription, and on their refusal struck their names off the roll, but retained the pictures. Bromley House was built in 1725 by Sir George Smith—a member of the well-known Nottingham banking family—who took the name of Bromley. The tradition

St. Mary's Church, Nottingham, from the North.

is that, as a result of some family dispute, he set up in this house a separate banking establishment which did not last very long. But more will be said of the Smiths when we come to East Stoke.

One or two houses in the city have literary associations. In Weekday Cross, near the Parish Church, is the birthplace of Philip James Bailey, author of "Festus," a remarkable poem which is much praised but little read, and on which the author

was perpetually engaged—emending, adding, pruning—to the end of his days. If ever there was a poem which shows best in extracts, it is "Festus." In later life Bailey lived for many years on the Ropewalk, overlooking the Park. Byron,



Lenton Road, Nottingham.

as a boy, lodged for a while at a house at the top of St. James' Street on Standard Hill; Kirke White was born in the Shambles at the side of the Exchange; Coleridge once preached a charity sermon in 1796 in the Unitarian Chapel on the High Pavement; and at the corner of Parliament Street and Newcastle Street

stood a shop which once contained the big-bellied coloured glass bottles associated with the mysteries of chemists and druggists. They belonged in this instance to William Howitt, who lived here with Mary, his wife, and the blameless pair were known to their troops of friends as "William and Mary." Each was a prolific writer; each was a gentle, purposeful being, exhaling mildness and the spirit of peace. Each was a shining instance of "the single talent well employed." In their parlour Bailey read aloud his "Festus" before publication, and Wordsworth once took tea.

Before we leave Nottingham there is one other place to which a word must be devoted. That is Trent Bridge. Not the bridge itself, which is an iron affair, and a dull substitute for the old stone bridge of many arches, itself the descendant of the mysterious Heth-Beth bridge, the name of which still puzzles the local antiquaries and defied a standardised spelling for centuries. Trent Bridge stands for something else. It stands for Notts cricket and for Notts football. But there is not much sentiment about bygone football and the ghosts which haunt the big ground beyond the river are flannelled. What a company they make! There is the older generation—William Clarke, the great lob bowler; Redgate, the giant hitter; the Oscrofts of Arnold who could put a whole eleven into the field, and the incomparable George Parr, hero alike with bat and ball, who made the mighty soaring hit out of the ground over the elm tree which bears his name to this very day. They and their faithful followers are long since gone, but Dean Hole has pictured in a vivid sentence or two the scenes in which they took part. "That dear old field with its long line of booths and stands, with Clarke the captain having a few confidential words with the Rector of Gedling, a devoted lover and learned judge of cricket, and with Johnson, the secretary, smiling at everybody through his spectacles, and the fruit merchant inviting us to buy his pears at six a penny, and the dealers in correct cards announcing, 'The order, gentlemen, the order—Nottingham goes in.'" Long since, indeed, it must have been if pears were six a penny.

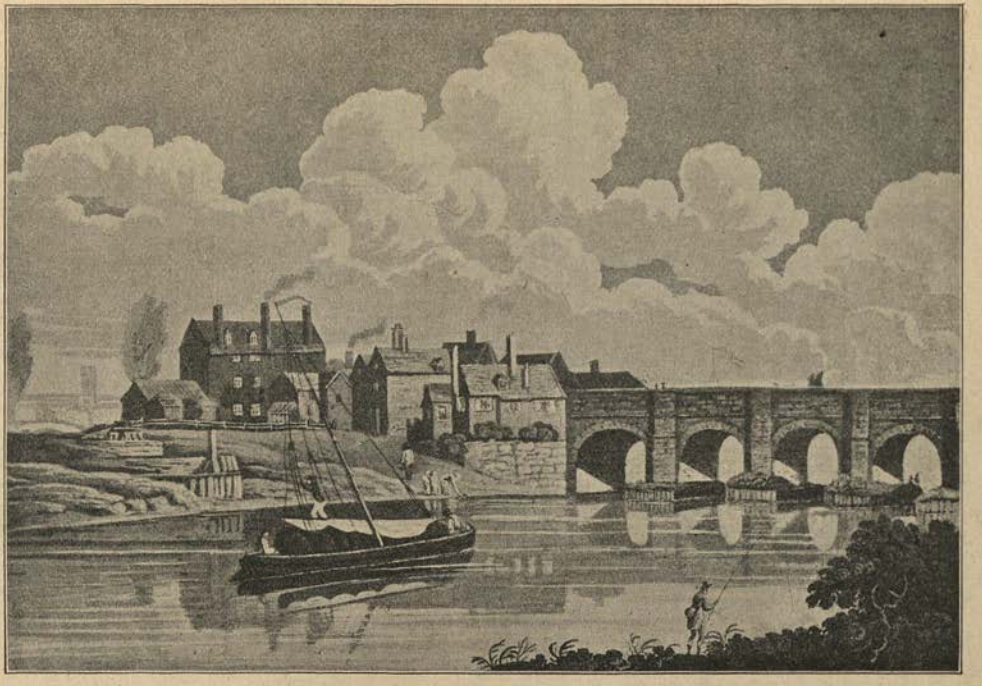
The writer knew Trent Bridge best and wasted many a summer day there, when a later but equally splendid generation had succeeded, when Arthur Shrewsbury and William Gunn used to open the Notts innings—and glad the enemy were to break *that* partnership—when Barnes was in his prime, and Wilfrid Flowers'

broad smile embraced the whole ground, and Mordecai Sherwin played his cheerful antics behind the wickets but "kept" with the best of them, and the lions of the visiting team were George Ulyett and blithe Tom Emmett, and Hornby and Barlow—the run-stealers who "flickered to and fro"—and the bearded giant "W. G." was at his prime, and Long Tom bowled for Surrey, and no one was quite sure whether Peel was better than Briggs, or whether Abel or Shrewsbury held the first place in the averages. To every cricketer in the wide world the name of Trent Bridge is only less well known than that of Lord's and the Oval, and the proud boast of Notts cricket has always been that no man plays for Notts unless he be a Notts man. Kent and Yorkshire have the same fine tradition.

Southerners may talk of the Hambleden men, and Canterbury is a rare ground when the bells are pealing on a summer afternoon in the Harry Tower of the great cathedral, and Lord's is superbly metropolitan on a big day, and the Oval is cheerfully cockney, and the Red Roses and the White bloom gaily enough on their native heaths. But Trent Bridge has memories as fine as any of them, and a list of names that equals the very best. Long may the correct cards go round! "The order, gentlemen, the order—Nottingham goes in."

A mile to the west of Nottingham Castle, in a loop of the little river Leen, stands the village of Lenton, now included in the borough of Nottingham, and fast losing all individuality of its own. Yet there was a time when Lenton counted for more even than Nottingham, so powerful was the great Cluniac Priory which William Peveril founded about 1105. It has all gone. Not one stone stands upon another, and the very ruins of this noble Benedictine foundation have been swept ruthlessly away.

The story of the last Prior of Lenton is a very sad one—perhaps the saddest of all the victims of Henry VIII.'s rapacity. Nicholas Heath owed his appointment to the very man who caused him to be hanged; indeed, he is said to have promised Cromwell £100 for the nomination. It has been suspected that the bribe was not paid, but whether that be so or not Nicholas Heath was accused of treason in 1536, and in 1538 he and eight of his monks, together with four poor labourers of Lenton, were thrown into prison and tried at Nottingham. They were found guilty, as a matter of course, and the Prior was hanged, drawn, and quartered before his own Priory gate. The villain of the plot



View of the Old Trent Bridge. Aquatint by Cartwright.

seems to have been one Dan Hamlet Penkeryche, a disreputable monk who had run away three times from the Priory, but on each occasion had returned and made his submission. It was he who sent information to London as to certain treasonable conversations at Lenton. Indiscreet words, undoubtedly, had been used, and indiscretions in those days were often expiated on the gallows. Two of the monks had "railed at the King." The incident is thus described by the Sub-Prior :—

"On Easter week in the misericorde, at the board end, sate Dan John Hawghtune and Dan Rawffe Swenson, and the former said, 'It is a marvellous world, for the King will hang a man for a word speaking now a days.' 'Yes,' said Dan Rawffe, 'but the King of Heaven will not do so, and he is King of all kings; but he that hangs a man in this world for a word speaking, he shall be hanged in another world his self.' I rebuked them for never speaking a good word for the King. On the morrow they told my master, the Prior, and he consulted with the Priory Council on the Tuesday. Then was I afraid for my life, for I had heard many of the monks speak ill of the King and Queen and Lord Privy Seal, whom they love worst of any man in the world. I trust unto God I shall cause them to be known as they be, or else it were great pity."

It seems incredible that the Prior of a great Cluniac monastery should be hanged—*tractus et suspensus*, as the old sentence ran—on such evidence as that. But so it was. Cromwell had a spite against Heath; Henry VIII. was in constant need of money, and Lenton had a revenue of £329 a year and goods worth—to those who seized them—£252. What the four poor labourers of Lenton had done to bring them under the savage displeasure of the authorities, history does not record. Perhaps they had taken a humble part in the Pilgrimage of Grace. The Abbey gateway, before which Prior Heath was hanged, stood across the road between the White Hart Inn and the entrance to the old church, and was pulled down in a stupid fit of vandalism as late as 1800. The Norman font from the Priory stands in the new parish church. It is famous among ecclesiologists. Square in form, its sides are most elaborately sculptured. The Baptism of Christ is represented on one side, the Crucifixion on another, a large floriated Cross is carved on a third, and the fourth is divided into four panels, the sculptures of which have been variously interpreted.

There is only one other feature of interest in Lenton. That is the White Hart Inn, a picturesque house, obviously built for an older generation and for customs which have ceased to be. It was rebuilt, about a century ago, on the site of a still earlier house, well known in its day as the Lenton Coffee House, and a favourite resort on summer evenings for the citizens of Nottingham, who strolled through the meadows by the side of the river Leen. The pleasure gardens and the bowling green of the White Hart used to be thronged when the stately and shapely trees, which now crown the inn and add so much to the picture, were but striplings. Times have changed; the Leen side walk is a desolation; new customs have arisen; the White Hart has a different *clientèle* to-day. At the side of the inn is a very curious relic, a fragment of the old Peveril Gaol—the debtors' prison for "the honour of Peveril." This honour included 127 places in Nottinghamshire, 120 in Derbyshire, and some in Yorkshire, and the Peveril Court was a court of pleas for the recovery of small debts. It was held in its latter days in the chapel of St. James, Nottingham. Founded in 1113, the Peveril Court was not abolished until December 31, 1849, after a long history of more than seven centuries. By some odd chance the gaol at Lenton—there was another at Basford—was not pulled down, and those who are curious in these matters may see the barred rooms, looking on to a small exercise ground, where debtors were immured at the sentence of the Court.

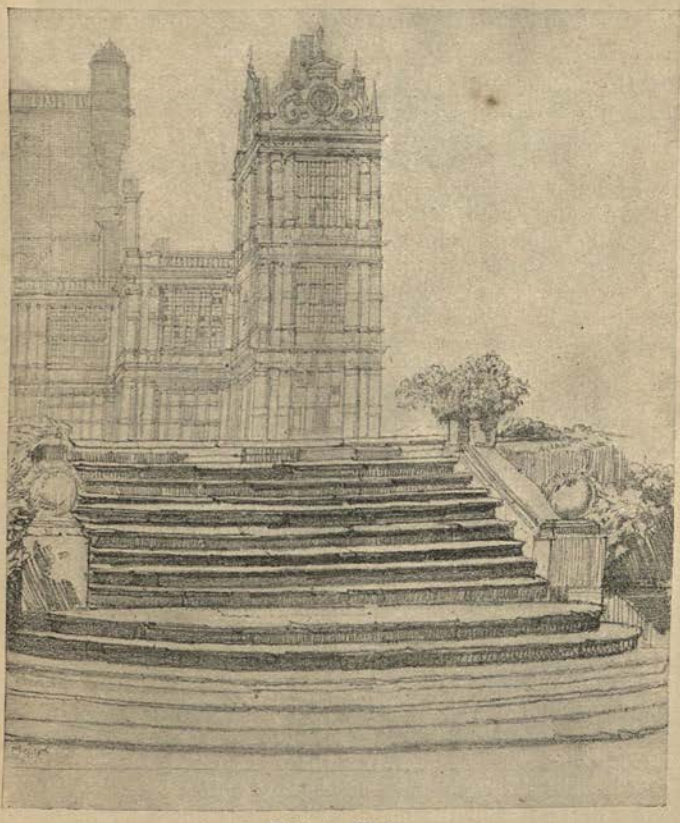
Close to Lenton, where the main road to Derby crosses the Leen and the Nottingham canal, stands the entrance lodge to Wollaton Park. This is a picturesque building with round angle turrets on either side of the gateway, and a flat lead roof. Wollaton Hall is the family mansion of the Willoughbys, ennobled in 1711, on the famous occasion when Queen Anne used the Prerogative to create a batch of ten Peers in order that the Government of the day might secure a party majority in the House of Lords. The first Lord Middleton was the second son of Sir Francis Willoughby, who was the friend and patron of Ray, the natural philosopher. The Willoughbys owe the foundation of their family fortunes to a Nottingham wool merchant, named Ralph Bugge, who in 1240 purchased an estate at Willoughby-in-the-Wolds—where we shall see several Willoughbys lying in state—and changed his own unpleasing patronymic for that of his new home. The Wollaton estate

came to them through the heiress of the Morteins in the reign of Edward III., and the Willoughby of the time of Henry VIII. enriched himself, by favour of the Crown, on the spoils of the Priory of Lenton. The most famous member of the family in Elizabethan days was Sir Hugh, the Arctic explorer, who was lost in the ice with all his company at "Arzina in Lapland neere unto Kezur." Hakluyt, who tells the story, describes with much dramatic power how some Russian fishermen came upon this ship of the frozen dead, and found Sir Hugh seated in his chair in the cabin with his will laid before him and the ship's papers all carefully kept to a date in January, 1554.

Wollaton Hall, one of the most imposing Renaissance mansions in the kingdom, was begun by Sir Francis Willoughby in 1580. It is said to have cost £80,000, and the stone was brought from the famous quarries of Ancaster, in Lincolnshire. The architect was John Thorpe, the most distinguished of all the architects of the English Renaissance period, who designed Kirby Hall and other famous mansions, and broke clean away from the old Tudor traditions. Wollaton is not in the ordinary style of Elizabethan mansion, which was either E shaped or H shaped; its main feature is that of a lofty central hall rising above a flat roof, with a square pavilion projecting at each corner. The multiplicity of the windows is characteristic of the period. The dimensions of the central hall are 60 feet by 30 feet, and 50 feet in height, the windows being 30 feet from the ground.

The chief beauty of the Park, which is nearly eight hundred acres in extent and is enclosed by a fine brick wall, is a magnificent avenue of limes, through which the Hall is approached from Lenton. The gardens, still of great beauty, once had the reputation of being the finest in England, and the first glass-house for the protection of plants is said to have been built at Wollaton at the end of the seventeenth century. Wollaton has never been a show place. Even in the eighteenth century the artist-tourist, Bray, complained that permission to see the mansion was refused him—"a piece of pride, or gloomy inhospitality," he comments, "which for the credit of the county is rare." But in these days, by writing in advance, permission may sometimes be obtained. Wollaton is perilously near Nottingham, and the tide of advancing bricks and mortar, which has already in recent years rolled down the steep hill from the city, will not long be stayed by the Leen and the canal. The

family is very rarely in residence, and there is little doubt that sooner or later Wollaton Park will share the fate—and it has been an entirely honourable fate—of the park which once was the pleasaunce of Nottingham Castle. Then will come such a chance of making a new suburb as does not occur once in a century. But let Nottingham take care that the speculative estate-knacker is kept out at all hazards! This is a work worthy of the City herself.



Wollaton Hall.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEADOWS; WILFORD; CLIFTON GROVE AND THE CLIFTONS; BARTON; HENRY IRETON

"How delightful it is, when wearied with the bustle and the noise of business, to escape from the narrow streets filled almost to suffocation and to spring over the bridge near the Navigation Inn, bursting at once upon Nature, arrayed in her richest verdure!" So wrote the "Wanderer" in 1834, whose agreeable book "Walks round Nottingham," is a curious medley of pious ejaculation and sound topographical research. If he were to spring over the same bridge to-day he would burst not upon Nature but upon a particularly dismal street along which the trams run to Wilford Bridge. The district is still called the Meadows—*lucus a non lucendo*—but a drearier crop of flowers than these railway sidings and factories and mean brick houses was never conceived by a builder's draughtsman. The Meadows! The whole three hundred acres which stretched from the Leen down towards the Trent were once real meadows, famous for their floods in winter and in the spring for their crocuses. They formed part of the wide belt of commonable land round Nottingham, wherein each burgess might keep three head of cattle from July 6 to August 13, and again from October 3 to Candlemas, while at other portions of the year it was allotted for the use of aged burgesses or their widows. So it remained until 1845, when the railways—the first train ran from Nottingham in 1839—required land for extension, and the town wanted space in which to expand, and so by Act of Parliament the burgess rights were bought out and extinguished.

It is no use lamenting the loss of the Meadows; that was inevitable sooner or later, but there is no excuse save private greed, want of imagination, and lack of public enterprise for the utter dreariness of the district which has arisen in the ruined

fields. Mention has been made of the crocuses. Nottingham folks used to go "crocusing" in spring as they went blackberrying in September. There was no need to search for the flower. The whole Meadows were ablaze with fairy gold, and in proof thereof may be quoted a pleasant little poem, written by Mrs. Ann Gilbert, a lady much better known to those of an earlier generation by the name of Ann Taylor. She and her sister Jane wrote the "Original Poems," which are still a pure joy to the cognoscenti—the poems in which Greedy Richard, and Meddlesome Matilda, and Dirty Jim are some of the leading actors. The poem is called, "The Last Dying Speech of the Crocuses":—

Ye tender-hearted gentlefolk of Nottingham's fair town
And ye who long have loved us from the poet to the clown,
Attend our sore complainings, while with one accord we weep,
From mossy beds uprising, where we sought our summer sleep.

How many a pleasant spring-tide, ere a blossom peeped of May,
Nor yet a stealthy violet its dwelling did betray,
And scarce the winter flood had left the lowlands to the sky,
We came in thronging multitudes to gladden every eye.

We came a simple people in our little hoods of blue,
And a blush of living purple o'er earth's green bosom threw,
All faces smiled a welcome, as they gaily passed along,
And, "Have you seen the Crocuses?" was everybody's song.

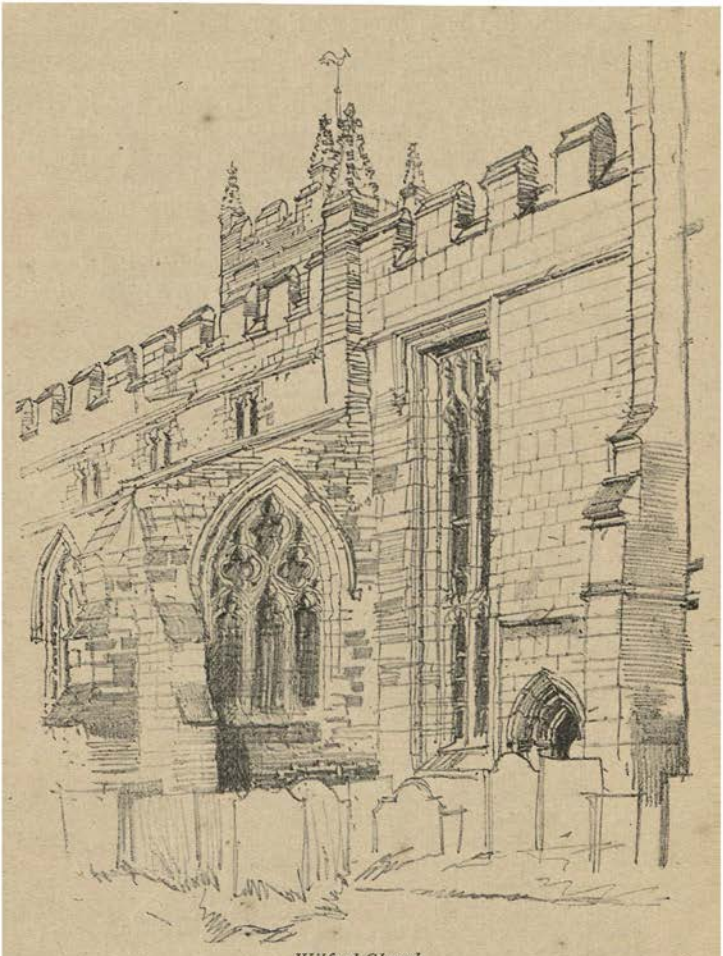
Forth came the happy children to their revel in the flowers,
Forth came the weary working-man to that sweet show of ours,
Forth came the lace-girl cheerily the common joy to share,
And e'en the stately gentle-folks were pleased to see us there.

But oh! twas dreary midnight when we heard the winds bewail,
Deep strange Eolian whisperings came sighing on the gale,
Anon with hammer, wheel and blast the welkin rang around,
And each a deadly shiver felt beneath us on the ground.

Awakened in the solemn gloom of that untimely hour,
The little spectre darted up of each ill-omened flower,
While o'er its head a coming spring in brick-red trance was seen,
As factory, mill and wharf besoiled our home of meadow green.

One gentle shriek the silence broke, one quiver of despair,
"Our fatherland, farewell!" we cried, "Farewell, ye meadows fair!"
"Dear children born of yester-spring—dear children, yet to be—
Ye shall but read of Crocuses—no more alas! to see."

"Spirit of giant trade! we go; on wings of night we fly,
Some far sequestered spot to seek, where loom may never ply,
Come line and rule—come board and brick—all dismal things in one—
Dread Spirit of Inclosure come—thy wretched will be done!"



Wilford Church.

The prayer is fulfilled. The Spirit of Enclosure has come. Its "wretched will" is done, and the crocuses are no more. So, instead of springing over the bridge by the Navigation Inn—

the inn still stands, though the navigation seems scanty—it is better to take the tram to Wilford Bridge.

This is a private bridge, where toll is still scrupulously taken. Before 1870, there was a ferry across to the picturesque old inn, which still survives the tide of change. Here a shocking accident took place in 1784, for while the ferry boat was out of repair a wherry was used and eleven people impatiently crowded into this one market day and were struck by a heavy squall in mid-stream. The boat was driven against the ferry chain and upset, and six persons were drowned. For as they were clinging desperately to the chain a man on shore, " wishing to be serviceable," according to a contemporary account, let down the chain with disastrous results.

Wilford is still a pretty village, though its charms have naturally suffered of recent years, owing to its proximity to Nottingham, and in the old days the view from the churchyard on the river bank across the wide open meadows to the Castle and St. Mary's must have been delightful. There was then no deforming colliery on the other side of the Trent, and local artists delighted to paint the fine and spreading landscape before them, while local poets sang its praise in rhyme.

Wilford ! whichever way to thee
We come from thy surrounding plains ;
Whether by Clifton's wood-walks dim
Or Bridgford's gipsy-haunted lanes,
Or from yon spired and castled town
O'er meads where flowers in myriads blow,
Thy scenes so beautify the rest
That all, through thee, most lovely grow.

Dear village ! I have wandered far
And much have known and felt and done,
Since first from Lenton fields I saw
Thy waters mock the setting sun,
As up they sent to heaven again
The beams it shed o'er them and thee,
While Spring went softly forth and touched
With welcome brightness tower and tree.

So wrote Spencer Hall in 1846, and the lines have more real poetry in them than Kirke White's oft-quoted verses.

Here would I wish to sleep. This is the spot
Which I have long marked out to lay my bones in :

> Tired out and wearied with the riotous world,
> Beneath this yew I would be sepulchred.
> It is a lovely spot! the sultry sun,
> From his meridian height, endeavours vainly
> To pierce the shadowy foliage, while the Zephyr
> Comes wafting gently o'er the rippling Trent,
> And plays about my wan cheek. 'Tis a nook
> Most pleasant.

"This," as Jeffreys once bluntly observed of a poem of Wordsworth's, "This will never do." This is the affected pose of an anæmic and evangelical sentimentalist. Kirke White died young, and so, in a way, justified these sepulchral musings, but his unhappy end does not make the lines good poetry. He was buried in Cambridge, where he died, but a marble medallion and window to his memory are to be seen in Wilford Church. White spent a few months in a cottage at Wilford in 1804, just before he entered the University, but, unfortunately for local pilgrimage, the cottage has gone.

Poor White! The current of his brief career flowed in none too favourable a channel. The son of "a butcher of low habits," though his mother was a very superior woman who, later on, kept a successful boarding-school for young ladies, he was apprenticed as a delicate boy of fourteen to a stockinger. Naturally, he detested the perpetual clatter of the frame, and was glad to escape to a solicitor's office, first as a clerk and then as an articled clerk. But the law was hardly more congenial than stocking-making, and in 1804 he was released from his articles and read for Cambridge with the object of entering the Church. He died in 1806 before he had time to take his degree. His untimely fate excited general sympathy, in view of the merit and promise of the verses which he had already published, and Southey—generous, warm-hearted, pedestrian, meritorious, long-suffering Southey—was asked to write a memoir and edit his poetry. Southey performed the task not merely faithfully but with a lavish appreciation which posterity—outside of Nottingham, at any rate—has found rather hard to understand. The Kirke White fashion is out of date. It may, indeed, return. But the odds are long against it. Kirke White has had his full share of fame. Scores of minor poets exist to-day with poetical gifts much greater than his, whom fame will never find. We do not forget what Byron said:—

Unhappy White! while life was in its spring
And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.

Bold prophecy! If Kirke White's muse had really waved a "joyous wing," one could the better believe it. But "joyous" is the very last epithet to describe the poetical pinion of Kirke White.

Such, at any rate, were my reflections as I looked at the memorial window in Wilford Church, and then turned to search for the resting-place of a very different sort of worthy. This was the grave of Captain John Deane, commander of the "Nottingham Galley", who was buried here in 1761. His story is forgotten now, but it made a great sensation two hundred years ago. Captain Deane, the son of a Nottingham gentleman of fair fortune, was apprenticed to a butcher at his own desire, but being involved in some deer-stealing foray, he deemed it advisable to leave Nottingham and enter the navy. By 1710 he had quitted the service and his relatives fitted out a ship for him called the "Nottingham Galley," which sailed from Boston for North America. She was driven by a storm on to a rock called Boon Island, near the mouth of the Piscataqua River, and from December 11 until January 4 the crew suffered every extremity of hunger and privation, and were impelled to the dreadful necessity of eating human flesh. The startling phrase, employed in the contemporary account of the affair, was that they "used up" the dead carpenter, and the adventures and sufferings of the crew of the "Nottingham Galley" were as well known in the days of Queen Anne as the story of the sufferings of the crew of the "Bounty" later in the century. Captain Deane afterwards took service for the Tsar and commanded a Russian ship of war from 1714 to 1720, and, later on, he acted as British Consul in Flanders and Ostend. Then he came home to end his days in quiet at Wilford and lived retired from 1738 to 1761 in "a neat dwelling" on the village green.

There was a parish school at Wilford founded in 1736 by a rector who left £200 for the building fund, £30 per annum salary for the schoolmaster, and £5 to buy books and other necessaries. In 1765 the schoolmaster was the Rev. Isaac Pickthall, and among his scholars was young Gilbert Wakefield,

who has left on record his remembrance of his school hours. "We came into the school," he says, "at 5 in summer, and with the deduction of less than two hours' intermission at breakfast and dinner continued there till 6 at night. A dreadful punishment, in truth, at that active and sprightly age, on which I never reflect but with disgust and horror." Wakefield was then a little boy of nine! Such was discipline in the middle of the eighteenth century. Pickthall is described as "a man of almost unparalleled simplicity and innocence of manners," and the barbarous hours he imposed on his wretched boys were due to "pure excess of conscientiousness and a religious anxiety to do justice to his scholars." It may be observed that

The Trent near Clifton.

John Wesley prescribed similar hours for the school which he founded at Kingswood. But the eighteenth century was a century of sharp contrasts. The conscientious master hopelessly overdid it; the careless one let the boys do pretty much what they liked, punctuating his general apathy with occasional violent thrashings.

Leaving Wilford, the road skirts the river at a picturesque bend, where the old elms, now severely pollarded, are said to have been planted about 1700 by one of the lords of Clifton. Half a mile on, a pathway through the fields, affording pleasant views across the river and the broad open expanse on the other side, leads to the gentle ascent on the summit of which is the far-famed Clifton Grove. This is a long, level grove on the

high bank above the Trent, a noble avenue of elm and beech and oak, broad enough to secure dignity and avoid the appearance of a lane. William Bray, writing in 1783, says that the trees were planted in 1740, and that the elms and firs were "mostly large when they were set." The avenue has suffered heavily from the storms of the last half century, and many of the old trees have gone, but others have been planted in their places, and the glory of the grove is jealously guarded. The steep declivity down to the river is also well planted along its whole extent. The Trent is here at its finest, rushing along in one of its swiftest channels at the big bend, and the prospect is as pleasing as the heart of poet could desire. As for the legend of the Fair Maid of Clifton and the tragical end of Margaret and her faithful Bateman, they can best be read by those who care for such things in Kirke White's poem, "Clifton Grove." To me the story is a weariness, and the whole poem only valuable for the tender, appreciative lines in which Kirke White expressed his love of the spot, where he spent some of his happiest hours:—

> The deepening glen, the alley green,
> The silver stream, with sedgy tufts between,
> The mossy rock, the wood-encumbered leas,
> The broom-clad islands and the nodding trees,
> The lengthening vista, and the present gloom,
> The verdant pathway breathing waste perfume,
> These are the charms, the joys which these impart
> Bind thee, blest Clifton, close around my heart.

There is no doubt of the sincerity of that utterance. A real love of the place struggles hard to find expression in an antithetical metre wholly unsuited to act as its vehicle.

Clifton Grove terminates in the private demesne of Clifton Hall, and the path turns abruptly down to the delightful old village, full of picturesque, well-gardened cottages, gay with flowers through most of the year, a village without plan or regularity, but the more charming on that account, and just as rural to-day as it was a hundred years since. The Hall and the church stand close together, and the name of Clifton dominates both alike, as well it may, seeing that for seven hundred years there was a reigning Clifton of Clifton Hall, until the estate passed, in 1869, through an heiress to the Bruces of Downhill, Co. Londonderry. The present owner, Colonel

Bruce, is the son of the lady who succeeded her brother, the last Sir Robert Clifton, in that year.

So for seven centuries at least the Cliftons were known in this place, and it matters not into which century your local researches conduct you, you are pretty sure to stumble upon a Gervase or a Robert Clifton, who is seen to be a man of mark and a leader among his fellows. They are all lying at rest in the church now, their number made up and their race run. Some of the earliest sculptured stones are almost beyond de-

Clifton Grove.

ciphering; but the name can usually be made out; and there are brasses and effigies, and elaborate alabaster and marble monuments, and mural memorials ranging down to the plainer tablets of modern time. The influence of the Cliftons was at its zenith during the first half of the seventeenth century in the time of the gallant Sir Gervase (1587–1665). He was the son of "Gervase the Gentle," a notable figure at the courts of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth. His father died when he was but four months old, so he was taken charge of by his grandmother—for his mother married again—and when she died her grandson recorded her virtues as "a loving and

careful grandmother" and added that he loved her "for being a lady and for her piety and her exemplary virtues." This was the age when young men cheerfully ruined themselves at Court to win a smile from the Virgin Queen; Sir Gervase was fortunate in a long minority, and when he came of age he was a most eligible match. He married seven times, and each time well, but he only put up a joint memorial to his first two wives—Penelope Rich, daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and Frances, daughter of the Earl of Cumberland. *Memoriae conservandae causa dilectissimarum sibi conjugum* runs the inscription on the marble monument, but a far more tender memorial to Lady Frances is to be found in Simpson's charming funeral verses:—

Wonder and Beauty did contest
Which of them two should grace her best.
Wonder then said that she alone
Was fit to write on her own stone.
Pride and she at difference were,
Vanity must not dare come near,
Divinity and she were one
And best were pleased when most alone.
Contemplation was the tie
Which bound her thoughts in unity.
For poverty she had a hand
Which like a harvest ear did stand
Full and open! Her marble stone
Still invites a parting groan.
Beauty said "She would not vie
For outward parts to please the eye."
The inward beauties of the mind
Soul magazines she there did find.
There were honours, riches, plenty,
Grace and goodness, glories dainty,
Charity in a robe of gold
Sate there enthroned; all might behold.
The mental virtues did not weep,
Her Leet or Court did justice keep.
There were all that might be said
Of goodness in a wife or maid.
Beauty said, "There was her store,"
And Wonder cried, "Enough! no more."
These are enough to build a tomb
That shall out-last the day of doom.
Nature's Darling, Virtue's Glory
Thy best self is thy best story.

Some of the lines are a little fantastical, but how charming the others, and how perfect the last couplet! And was Sir

Gervase himself worthy of being the husband of "Nature's Darling"? By all accounts he was. For he was a very gallant, loyal gentleman and when the troubles came he fought for his king and placed a fortune of £80,000 at his service. He was known far and wide, and when he died in 1665 another Cavalier poet, Shipman, wrote his elegy, which is well worth quoting, for he took Sir Gervase as his pattern of "The Old English Gentleman."

Clifton! a name too big for verse,
Fit only to describe his Hearse;
Pens cannot, Trumpets should the Name reherse.

So ancient! some learned men afford
That observation on record
It's likely to have been the first made word.

Nor at its rising hath it done
Like to the far less glorious sun,
Rise by degrees; its very Morn was Noon.

The hospitality of old,
Which gave that Age the name of Gold
He did revive and afterwards uphold.

Nor did his vast Revenues rise
From Rackings, worst of Tyrannies,
His farms were Portions and his Rents a Prize.

His charity aimed high and true,
Not like some great ones in our view
He made as many as they did undo.

To that proud Zeal he ne'er did fall,
Alms Houses build in sight of all,
For every poor man was his Hospital.

Base Actions he did so defie
He lost what would an Earldom buy
Rather than sell one Drachm of Loyalty.

Though Vapours clouded Britain's sky
He, like Pythagoras' Bird, did fly
Above those Clouds and all their storms defie.

For all these Clouds he scorned to yield
But still remained like his rich shield,
A Lyon argent in a Sable Field.

Loyal gentleman, kind landlord, friend of the poor, inflexible in honour, Sir Gervase evidently deserved all the blessings

which came to him from his seven wives. Thoroton says of him that he was " the most noted person of his time for courtesy," and that " his hospitality exceeded very many of the nobility and his continuance in it most men, being almost fourscore years Lord of this place, of a sound body and a cheerful facetious spirit." It is evident that Thoroton, who was a medical man as well as antiquary, had been called in professionally to see Sir Gervase, and he gives a remarkably beautiful account of his death :—

" He received from me the certain notice of his approaching death, as he was wont to do an invitation of his good friends to his own Bowling-green, one of the most pleasant imaginable, and thereupon called for his old chaplain, Mr. Robert Thirlby, to do the office of his confessor, and when he had done with him, he called for his children whom, Patriarch-like, he particularly blessed and admonished, with the smartness and ingenuity of a practised and well-studied orator. The day following he received visits from divers friends, in the old dining-room near his bed-chamber (in which room his portrait hangs to this day), who were not so sensible of his danger, because he entertained them after his usual manner, yet that night (as I easily foretold him) his sleepiness began which could never be taken away."

It was a fine end to a fine career. Sir Gervase's name stood third on the first list of the new order of baronets created by James I. in 1611. He survived the Civil Wars and lived to see the Restoration, after being fined £40,000 for his " delinquency to the Parliament." Perhaps he was on tolerable terms with Ireton, whose house at Attenborough, just across the river, he could see from the windows of the Hall ; perhaps his marriage connection with Lord Rich, Cromwell's Lord High Admiral, stood him in good stead. But he manifestly was a man without a single personal enemy and settled down during the Commonwealth to a quiet, retired life.

Sir Gervase had his family troubles. His eldest son, Gervase, by his first wife, described as " the wretched unfortunate who was his father's greatest foil," died without issue in 1676. The title then passed to a boy who died unmarried, and the fourth baronet was the grandson of the first Sir Gervase by his sixth wife, one of the Eyres of Rampton. He had fifteen sons and one daughter, and so made the succession tolerably secure. Of the Cliftons who came after, little need be said ; none of

them rose to special distinction, and the most interesting figure of them all was General Sir Arthur Clifton of Barton, who was Colonel of the 1st Dragoons at Waterloo, and lived on to the patriarchal age of ninety-nine. He was the uncle of the last of the male line, the well-known Sir Robert Clifton, who died in 1869, after being the hero of some of the most fiercely contested elections in the Parliamentary history of Nottingham. Sir Robert sadly encumbered his estates by youthful follies on the Turf, and piled up a mountain of debt from which he never could get free. When he sought to retrieve his fortunes by digging for coal and opened the Clifton Collieries, the undertaking was badly managed and the golden profit did not come. But those who remember the last Sir Robert say that there never was a more generous landlord, nor a more thoroughgoing sportsman. Good fortune and bad alike he met with a smile. He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the term. He called himself an Independent with Tory leanings, and he was the idol of the Nottingham crowd. Sir Robert died in 1869 at the age of forty-three, and the baronetcy died with him. In the old days there was a legend that a sturgeon always swam up the Trent to foretell the death of a Clifton. It is not recorded that any such visitor appeared to herald the extinction of the line.

The Hall itself has little pretension to beauty as seen from the churchyard. It is a spacious, plain, three-storeyed brick building with stone balustrade and pillared portico. It contains several good portraits of past generations of Cliftons, the most beautiful and valuable being that of Mrs. Markham, by Romney. Mrs. Markham was a daughter of the sixth baronet, and married Archdeacon Markham, son of an Archbishop of York. The chief features, however, of Clifton Hall are its magnificent situation on the high bank above the Trent, and the series of five grass terraces, one above the other, which lead down to the level of the river, with old yew trees and fine stone staircases, on which the architect lavished alike his own art and his patron's money. There is also a noble summer-house perched on arches on the highest point of Clifton Bank, which was built by Sir Robert Clifton, the fifth baronet, in 1734.

Clifton Church is a cruciform building with a central tower, and possesses a beautiful pre-Reformation stone crucifix at the west end. The finest of the Clifton monuments are in the

north transept, though the chancel walls are also well covered with their memorials. Mingled with these are others bearing the names of Holland and Markham, relatives by marriage of the reigning house. In the south transept is a floor-stone bearing an inscription to the memory of the "Black Prince," a negro servant at the Hall, who was converted in 1673 and died in 1685. Negro servants did not become common in England till a later date, and Joseph's conversion was one of the local wonders of his time. The Hall pew at the west end of the church, a series of stalls surrounding the font, is worth casual notice. The family chose a draughty place for their devotions. The church is well cared for now, but in 1834, when "Wanderer" wrote, he found the tombs in the south aisle "in a very neglected and filthy condition, covered with coke and coal dust." That was when Canon Markham was rector, who built the present rectory and laid out its fine gardens.

Two other interesting points about Clifton may be mentioned. One is that it has swallowed up the ancient village of Glapton; Clifton-cum-Glapton is still the official ecclesiastical title of the village. The other is that the two baronies of Clifton, the English and the Irish, have their remote origin here. The English barony was created in 1608 and bestowed on Sir Gervase Clifton, of Leighton Bromswold. His father was the fourth son of the Sir Gervase Clifton, of Clifton, whose brass is in the church, and who died in 1491. The Irish barony dates from 1721. The two have been held together at times, but they are now distinct. To explain how that came to pass would be much too tangled a genealogical tale for these pages.

The next village up the Trent from Clifton is Barton-in-Fabis or Barton-among-the-beans. The walk through the fields is famous locally, and not without reason. For after crossing a huge open field, lying at the side of the Hall gardens—which is divided every year among the farmers in units known as "gates," each "gate" being rather less than two acres—the path drops sharply down between two delightful plantations to the river meadows and then continues straight forward to Barton, with the fine hanging woods of the steep Trent bank on the left hand all the way. And at the end of the walk is Barton, an old-fashioned village, where almost every cottage genially invites you to "tea and hot water," and a church well worth visiting claims your brief attention.

The manor of Barton has had a curious history. It belonged for many generations to the Lords Grey of Codnor, whose castle near Heanor, on the borders of Notts and Derbyshire, was a place of considerable importance during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The last Lord Grey of Codnor had no legitimate heirs, but he had, as his will dated 1496 bluntly states, several bastards, including two Harrys, the "greater Harry" and "little Harry." To one of these Barton was left for a portion, and his daughter and heiress married one of the Derbyshire Sacheverells, who came and settled at Barton, and he and his male descendants held the manor for two hundred years, till the male line died out and the estate was carried by an heiress to the Cliftons. The name of Sacheverell frequently appears in the list of members of Parliament for the county, and the most prominent of these was the William Sacheverell who was active in resisting the attempt of James II. to introduce a new charter for the town of Nottingham. This provoked something like a riot, and Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, who came down to enquire into the matter, fined Sacheverell £500 for his share in the business. How Jeffreys conducted the case may be judged by a brief extract from his remarks to one of the witnesses. "You should know better," said he, "than to ask such insignificant, impertinent questions as you do. It was very saucy, I tell you, and if the best man in your party had done it, it had been saucy. You shall know our minds if you put us upon it, because you are so big of it. We are come to a fine pass that every little prick-eared fellow must come to demand maces that are the badges of authority, and they must not be told, forsooth, that they are saucy." Robert Sacheverell, son of this William, was elected for Nottingham in 1699, 1700, 1701, 1705, 1710, and 1713. The beautiful alabaster tomb in the chancel of the church is that of William Sacheverell (died 1616) and his wife Tabitha.

The inside of the church was modernised in 1810, and one who visited it in 1816 sums up the achieved result by saying that three or four hundred pounds had been expended in destroying "some of the most beautiful remains of antiquity in the county." These included a "rood loft, of excellent filigree Gothic carving, in perfect order, of which there is now only the mutilated cancelli, and the roodway through the south-west angle, from what was heretofore a small oratory or chantry." What remains

of the manor-house, where the Sacheverells lived, is now a farmhouse. But it is merely a fragment of the old mansion. The brick dovecote is still standing.

The importance of Barton in the old days—and indeed now, for that matter—lay in its ferry across the Trent, and the discovery of a fragment of Roman pavement in 1865 indicates the ferry's great antiquity. It is tempting to connect the Barton passage of the Trent with the ancient trackways along the crest of the hills round Gotham, and to surmise that it was at Barton that Charles I. crossed the Trent on his last midnight ride as a free man from Market Harborough to Southwell. But that will be more fully dealt with in a later chapter.

Just across the Trent from Barton is the village of Attenborough, which has its place in English history as the home of the Iretons, who lived in a house to the west of the church. They were of sufficient standing to marry with the Sacheverells, and the register declares that Henry Ireton was baptised on November 10, 1611. "Damn'd remonstring Ireton," the Cavaliers called him, for it was Ireton who drew up the Army's remonstrance which sealed the doom of King Charles. He was also called "the Scribe," from his skill in framing petitions, and there is no doubt that when he had finally made up his mind that Charles was not to be trusted, he was the King's most pitiless enemy. "He gave me words," said Ireton, "and we paid him in his own coin, when we found he had no real intention for the people's good, but to prevail by our factions and to regain by art what he had lost in fight." It was said at the time that Ireton intercepted a letter from the King to the Queen fixing his death, and that this was the cause of his implacability. But Ireton was above such personal motives. As is now generally admitted, he was one of the finest characters on the Parliament side. He refused an offer of £2,000 a year out of the confiscated estates of the Duke of Buckingham, and of his absolute unselfishness and devotion to principle there can be no doubt. "The best prayer-maker and preacher" in an army which was stuffed full of both, Cromwell loved him and trusted him, gave him his daughter Bridget to wife, and, when he died, buried him like a prince in Westminster Abbey, whence, a few years later, his remains were taken, drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn and hanged from sunrise to sunset—a poor

revenge. He was also one of the greatly-hated Major-Generals till Cromwell sent him to Ireland as Lord Deputy, where he died of fever at the siege of Limerick. At the battle of Naseby, Ireton was run through the thigh with a pike and wounded in the face by a halberd, and so was taken prisoner for a time, but managed to escape during the confusion of a later charge.

Nottingham Market Place in 1860.

CHAPTER V

GOTHAM ; EAST LEAKE ; BUNNY

FROM Barton-in-the-Beans it is a pleasant walk to Gotham, on the old high road from Nottingham to Loughborough. Gotham is the home of the so-called Merry Tales. These need not long delay us. Their merriment is rather sad and weary. Fashion in humour is as subject to change as fashion in other things, and they must have been a very simple and unsophisticated folk who found amusement in the tales of Gotham after a first hearing in their childhood. Nowadays the interest lies not so much in the tales as in the theories of origin to which they have given rise and the curious traditions and odd place-names with which they are connected. It is said that one Andrew Boord was the first to collect the tales in the reign of Henry VIII., and ever since his day Gotham has enjoyed the reputation of being the very home of rustic folly. "It passeth publicly," wrote Fuller in 1662, "for the periphrasis of a fool, and a hundred fopperies are feigned and fathered on the town folk of Gotham." Gotham itself means the home of the goats, and goats were ever associated with bearded foolishness.

The cuckoo story alone need be quoted, though I like better the one which relates how the people of Gotham pulled down one of their two windmills because the breezes were hardly strong enough to set the arms of both revolving. But the cuckoo tale is important for other reasons :—

"On a time the men of Gotham would have penned in the cuckoo, whereby she should sing all the year, and in the midst of the town they made a hedge round in compass and they had got a cuckoo and had put her in it and said, 'Sing here all the year and *thou shalt lacke* neither meat nor drink.' The cuckoo, as soon as she perceived herself incompassed within

the hedge, flew away. 'A vengeance on her,' said they; 'we made not our hedge high enough.'"

To attest the story you are shown a Cuckoo Hill, a Cuckoo Bush Field and even a Cuckoo Bush proper. This last is an ash tree standing among a few other trees on the summit of a low hill near the village, and the old name for it used to be Cuckoo Pen. At once the puzzles begin. For Cuckoo Pen does not mean the cuckoo enclosure, but Cuckoo Hill, Pen being the ancient British word for hill, which is found in Ing-pen Beacon, in Pennine, Penn and a score of other place-names. And what of the name Cuckoo itself? Does it necessarily refer to the bird at all? Is it any more than a corrupted form of the place-word which is seen in such village names as Cookham, Coxwell and Cuckfield, not to mention Cockpen, near Edinburgh, to which the famous laird belonged who went a-wooing Mistress Jean? It is easy enough to ask these questions; it is far more difficult to answer them, and though learned books have been written on the subject one can still hear the mocking note of the cuckoo at the end of the volume.

There are other Cuckoo Hills in England; there is, indeed, a second one in the far north of Nottinghamshire, within half a mile of Wiseton—the town of the wise. Is that an accidental collocation of names? If so, it is odd, because a name like that is usually bestowed sarcastically, and Wiseton really connotes the town of fools. But then it is also written Wigston, which, if correct, would take all the point out of the argument. This Cuckoo Hill near Wiseton has for a neighbour, Pusto Hill, and as to what that means I have nowhere found any enlightenment.

But to return to our Cuckoo Hill above Gotham. On the summit is a low tumulus, surrounded by a shallow trench, and the traditional bush itself stands in the angle made by two ancient tracks over the hill. Moreover, a quarter of a mile to the east is another ancient entrenchment, called Crow Wood Mot, with the tradition attached to it that the Saxon Moot used to be held there, while still further to the east and below the ridge is the reputed site of Rushcliffe Hall, where the St. Andrew family lived, who were lords of the manor of Gotham for long generations. This Rushcliffe figures in the Domesday Book as Risecliff; and it has given its name to the Wapentake of Rushcliffe, and to the Parliamentary division of the county

in which it is situated. One may be sure, therefore, that this hill and this old manor-house were places of note in the days gone by, though their history has faded into oblivion. It has been ingeniously suggested that the tales were invented to ridicule the proceedings of the Hundred Court of Rushcliffe; others have thought that they spring from "obsolete legal tenures"; others have put forward the theory that they arose from the contempt which the Saxon colony had for the Celtic village. The tradition that the inhabitants feigned madness on hearing that King John intended to cross their meadows, because wherever the king set foot became a public road, is ludicrous. That idea might have occurred to a lawyer but not to simple villagers, and apart from that the people of Gotham knew their place better than to play practical jokes on King John. Mediæval kings were not rashly to be jested with. When they did not see the joke they had an unpleasant habit of prescribing a flogging or a hanging.

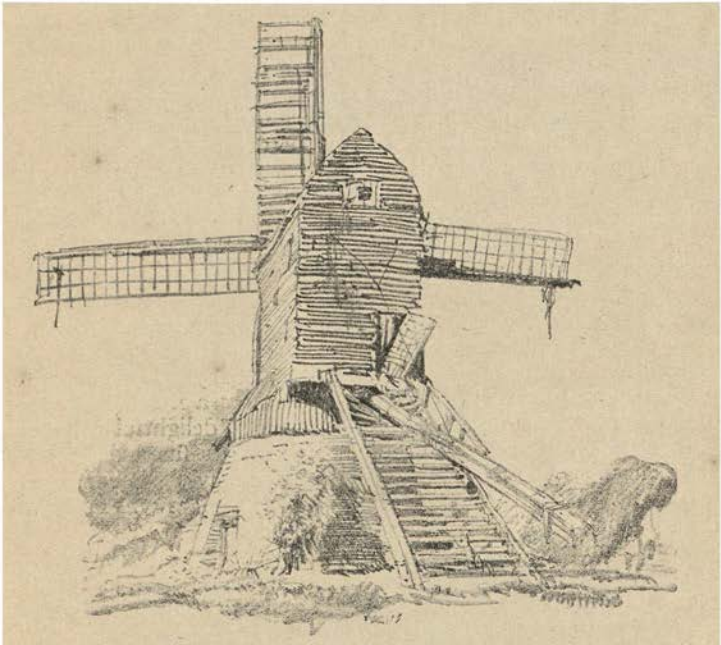
Gotham itself is rather a forlorn place. A recent visitor described it as "a furiously ugly village of extraordinarily wide and empty roads, and smelling violently of pigs. Gypsum mines and soap works still further render it undesirable." That description does not err on the side of generosity, but no one can deny Gotham's uncared-for and neglected look, though it is said to have been completely refurbished a century ago, and the dense volumes of smoke which pour steadily from the chimneys of the plaster works do not make things more cheerful. The church has not escaped the general blight. Its walls are adorned with ugly texts and crudely-painted commandments, and the west end smells strongly of its stores of oil and coke. Some interesting monuments in the chancel record the last members of the St. Andrew family, the male line of which became extinct by the death of John St. Andrew in 1625. He and his wife kneel facing one another in perpetual act of prayer, and their three daughters (now headless) kneel at their side. Their only son died when he was fourteen days old, and the babe is also to be seen in his tiny cradle. Some years ago these monuments were restored by Mr. Cecil Foljambe of Cockglode, "in memory of his ancestors of the St. Andrew family." In other churches of the shire similar acts of family piety on his part will be found.

If you wish to see for yourself the site of the Merry Tales,

take the road to Leake. Then, clear of the houses, turn off to the right by a track leading between the two ugly plaster works, whose roofs are perpetually covered with white powder, and go straight up the hill side. The rough scrub-wood on the right is what is known as Cuckoo Bush Hill. On the high ground a better and kindlier opinion of Gotham will soon assert itself, for this is a breezy hill top and the whole generous, curving sweep of the hills towards Barton is before you, with the plain beneath. Better still, when you reach the gate at the summit you come out upon an ancient track-way, which pleasantly recalls the Ridge-way on the Berkshire downs, or the Pilgrims-way in Surrey. Turn along this to the left and keep the high ridge. There are tumuli on these hills, but they are not all ancient British, for you soon reach others of a much later date, in the shape of the bunkers of the Rushcliffe Golf Club, which has invaded these airy uplands. At the club-house the road plunges down to the railway, and a long mile carries you into the village of East Leake.

This is a far pleasanter place than Gotham, and retains intact its agricultural aspect. The church is of some note, for it has a fine reticulated five-light east window of plain glass, and a number of splendid old poppy-head bench ends and seats of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—massive, hard, rude and uncomfortable, but of imperishable endurance. On one of these bench ends is "a pelican in her piety," showing the mother bird vulning herself in her breast with her beak, so that her young may feed on her warm blood. But the popular glory of East Leake is its shawm. There it hangs on the wall at the west end—a fearsome tin trumpet, measuring 7 feet 9 inches when at its greatest extension, and 4 feet 1 inch when closed, with a mouth 21 inches in diameter. This was in regular use down to 1855, and by means of it one of the gallery orchestra "vamped the bass." What a fearsome pride it must have been to the musician; what a joy and wonder to the worshippers of East Leake! "With trumpets also and shawms," says the Psalmist. So this was a shawm! No organ, we fancy, ever made so glad and, we hope, so acceptable a noise. There is a shawm in the museum at Lincoln, but objects in a museum never look the same as in their native habitat. Let us, therefore, thank the goodness and the grace that we have seen the shawm at Leake! The ecclesiologist feels on beholding it

the same sort of pride as the ornithologist who has seen the last great bustard that was shot in Norfolk. One of the rectors at East Leake who flourished a century ago, the Rev. Theophilus Hastings, startled the village by the announcement that he intended to marry his housekeeper. He published the banns thus: "I publish the banns of marriage between Theophilus Hastings (meaning myself) and Betty (meaning my housekeeper).



Costock Windmill.

If any of you know cause or just impediment, etc." Doubtless the great shawm vamped its hardest after so startling a pronouncement with all the fathomless bass of its ninety-three inches.

From East Leake we turn towards Bunny, leaving unvisited the pleasant little group of villages which lie in the neighbouring valley of the Soar—Ratcliffe and Kingston, Normanton and

Stanford. If you are on foot and have a map with you—a necessary adjunct—a three mile cross-country footpath starting from the bridge over the brook just outside the village which we crossed on the road from Gotham, will take you through fields all the way. But the road lies through Costock, or Cortlingstock—the village of the Cortlings, whoever they may have been—which has its dim memory of a skirmish in the Civil Wars surviving in the place-name Warrils or War-hills. There we join the old coach road from Loughborough to Nottingham and turn along it towards Bunny. The road rises gradually to the top of Bunny Hill and then makes a sudden winding plunge. Bunny Hill must have many memories of teams of exhausted horses struggling, panting and steaming to the summit in the coaching days, but it has later memories, too, of exhausted and grinding motor cars. In the young days of the motor industry to go up Bunny Hill without changing gear was something of an accomplishment. But now the engineer's victory is complete and Bunny Hill is disdained as a mere mole-hill.

So we drop down to Bunny, crossing close to the village the Fairham Brook, where once was a famous decoy for ducks, and Bunny is before us. The name, it may be remarked, has nothing to do with rabbits, but signifies a marshy place, full of bunes, or water reeds. Bunny is a delightful village of red-brick, with a noble church, big barns, a fine old school and almshouse, and the whole estate of Bunny Park lying on the right. Here lived many generations of the Parkyns family, whose story is as interesting as any in the county.

The founder of the Parkyns family was the Richard Parkyns, Recorder of Leicester and Nottingham, whose marble tomb may be seen in the chancel of the church, with effigies of himself and his lady. He died in 1603. His son, Sir George Parkyns, Knight, died in 1626, and it was his son, Thomas, who was made a baronet by Charles II., at the Restoration, for his services to the Royalist cause, though these were by no means so prominent as those of his brother, Colonel Isham Parkyns, Governor of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The second Sir Thomas is the famous one. Born in 1663, he went to Westminster School and Trinity, Cambridge, and practised law until his father's death. Then he settled down at Bunny, and began the new *régime* by roofing the chancel, and building a

vicarage house, a free school and four almshouses for four poor widows, whom he liberally endowed besides with two shillings a week and a plentiful supply of gowns, " peticoates " and coals.

But his ruling passion was wrestling. He kept two wrestlers at Bunny in regular pay, to train likely young men in the neighbourhood and to wrestle with him on his dining-room carpet when he wanted exercise. Moreover, in 1712, he instituted annual wrestling matches at Bunny, which took place on a plot of ground in what are now the gardens of the Rancliffe Arms. It was a strictly amateur affair, the first prize being a laced hat worth twenty-two shillings, with three shillings for the second, and the rules stipulated that any winner who sold the prize hat should be disqualified to enter another year. The Bunny wrestling matches continued uninterruptedly for ninety-eight years, till they came to an end in 1810. In the previous year only two competitors had entered, and when Lord Rancliffe announced that next time no prize would be given, the natural consequence was that no names were sent in. But for very many years the wrestling at Bunny had been one of the great local events of the season and it had produced some excellent athletes, the most famous of all being Isaac Newton, of Rempstone, who was the victor in 1754, 1756, 1757, 1758 and 1763.

Nor was Sir Thomas Luctator—as he humorously called himself—content merely with patronage of the sport. He wrote a curious book about his beloved pastime with the title, " The Inn Play, or Cornish-Hugg Wrestler, digested in a method which teacheth to break all holds and throw most falls mathematically." By means of that little volume, the reader may initiate himself into such wrestling mysteries as the flying horse, the flying mare, the hanging trippet, the in-clamp, the back clamp, the pinnion and the gripe. The baronet was fastidious as to his pupils :—

" I receive no Limberhams, no Darling sucking bottles, who must not rise at midsummer till eleven of the clock and till the fire has aired his room and cloaths of his colliquation sweats, raised by high sauces, and spicy forced meats, where the cook does the office of the stomach with the emetick tea-table, set out with bread and butter for breakfast ; I'll scarce admit a sheep-biter ; none but beef-eaters will go down with me, who

have robust, healthy and sound bodies. This may serve as a sketch of that person fit to make a wrestler."

It is an amusing little volume, which turns up in the sale rooms periodically and commands a respectable price, but its chief interest lies in its revelation of the author's original character and the amusing glimpses which it gives of his time. "If," says he, "you have a companion that disturbs your mirth, and would be rid of him, with your left hand take hold of his collar behind and with your right put between his legs, and lift him up easily and thrust him out of the room, for he can never turn upon you, but if you lift him too hard you'll throw him on his nose." But let it not be thought that Sir Thomas ran his wrestling hobby to the exclusion of every other interest. He was a very keen magistrate, and he had pronounced ideas of his own on the subject of domestic and farm servants, and the wages that should be paid to them. He tried to induce his neighbours to form a kind of association for the regulation of wages. Here was his scale for women servants :—

	£	s.	d.
A woman servant that taketh charge of brewing, baking, and of the kitchen and milk-house, that is hired with a gentleman's wife who does not take the charge upon herself	2	10	0
A woman-servant that serveth an husbandman or farmer, etc., or any other woman servant, shall take by the year not exceeding	2	0	0
A young maiden under the age of sixteen years shall take by the year not exceeding	1	5	0
A maid-servant aged sixteen and under twenty ..	1	10	0

An agricultural labourer was to have 6*d.* a day from Martinmass to Candlemass, without meat and drink, and 9*d.* a day from Candlemass to Martinmass. A head-ploughman was to have £5 a year, an under-ploughman £3 10*s.*, and a boy £1 17*s.* A schedule of all the hirings was to be sent in to the Chief-Constable. If any master made a breach of his agreement he was to be fined 40*s.* If he gave greater wages than agreed he was to be fined £5 or 10 days' imprisonment, while a servant leaving without notice was to go to prison for a month. It is also worth noting that at the beginning of the eighteenth century a magistrate could order any artificer, except a blacksmith, to

go into the harvest-field and help with the harvest. As for colliers' wages, Sir Thomas proposed a shilling a day without meat and drink for the actual getting of the coal; ten pence for the filler or barrower, and eight pence for the brakesman. Whether his proposals were adopted or not, we do not know, but the figures are of great social interest, as indicating the general rates of wages prevailing at the time.

But Sir Thomas's most remarkable achievement remains yet to be mentioned. In middle age he turned "gerund-grinder" and compiled a Latin Grammar for the benefit of his grandson, so bitter were his memories of "the old round-about way" in which he had been taught his Latin grammar at Westminster. "I am in great hopes," said Sir Thomas, "that the ingenious will take my hint and by their additional re-editions render it a lenient manual and more useful to the youth of future ages." However, hopes were made to be disappointed. "The youth of future ages" have known many Latin Grammars, but that of Parkyns is not of their number. It may be added that this Latin Grammar, printed by W. Ayscough, was one of the very earliest books published in Nottingham.

Sir Thomas loved Latin. Wherever the chance offered he put up a Latin inscription, and so on his remarkable tomb in Bunny Church the classics are well represented. In one compartment, he is shown wearing his wrestling jacket and cap, and standing resolute and ready for a grip; in another we see him fairly thrown on his back, defeated by Time, who, scythe in hand, is just in the act of taking another vigorous sweep among the grain.

Quem modo stravisti longo in certamine Tempus!
Hic recubat Britonum clarus in orbe pugil:
Nunc primum stratus, praeter te vicerat omnes,
De te etiam victor, quando resurgit, erit.

So run the poor Latin lines by Dr. Friend, who, as Headmaster of Westminster, might fairly have been expected to produce a better set. On the broad marble slab below it is recorded, among a multitude of other facts, that the deceased Baronet "built the Manor House in Bunny and East Leake, he built the Vicaridge House and most of the farm houses in Bunny and Bradmore. He studied Physick, both Galenic and Paracelsick, for the benefit of his neighbours; had a competent knowledge of most parts of the mathematicks, especially architecture and

hydraulicks, and contriving and drawing all his plans without an architect."

The last Baronet, who died in 1806, was a great fox-hunter, so devoted to the chase that in his old age, when he could hunt no longer, he used to put on his hunting cap and scarlet coat and sit at an upper window in hope of catching a glimpse of the hounds, if the meet was in the neighbourhood. He married three times, and it used to be said of him in Bunny that first he married a lady, then his housemaid, and lastly the nurse of his housemaid's children. The last Lord Rancliffe believed that the Baronet's third wife destroyed papers whereby he was robbed of part of his inheritance, and there is a well-authenticated story that one day when he met the old dame taking the air in her bath-chair, he reined up his horse and told her that but for dirtying his wheels he would have ridden her down, bath-chair and all. Such were the occasional amenities of early Victorian days. The old lady smiled and sat serene.

Meanwhile, while the last Baronet was indulging in these matrimonial adventures, his heir, Colonel Parkyns, was raised in 1795 to the Irish peerage—George III. was particularly lavish in his creation of Irish peerages—with the title of Lord Rancliffe. He was a friend of the Regent, and the "First Gentleman in Europe" graciously became god-father to his heir, the second lord, who, succeeding early on his father's death, spent his youth as the ward of the Earl of Moira, afterwards Marquis of Hastings. He married, in 1807, a daughter of the Earl of Granard, but separated from his wife owing to a notorious scandal. He was unable, however, to bring a divorce action, because his own conduct had been just as reprehensible as hers. On such issues the continuance of a peerage may depend! Lord Rancliffe was member for Nottingham in 1812, and was re-elected in 1818 and 1826, but retired in 1830, giving as his chief reason, "I am disgusted with the House of Commons, God knows." A Liberal of sorts, he voted for Feargus O'Connor when he stood for Nottingham in 1847, but down to his death, in 1850, he never became reconciled to the Repeal of the Corn Laws. "It is possible," wrote a local historian with sublime assumption, "that this dereliction of principle was the result of imbecility of mind." But it is also just barely possible that it was the result of conviction.

This Lord Rancliffe often used to invite Tom Moore to come

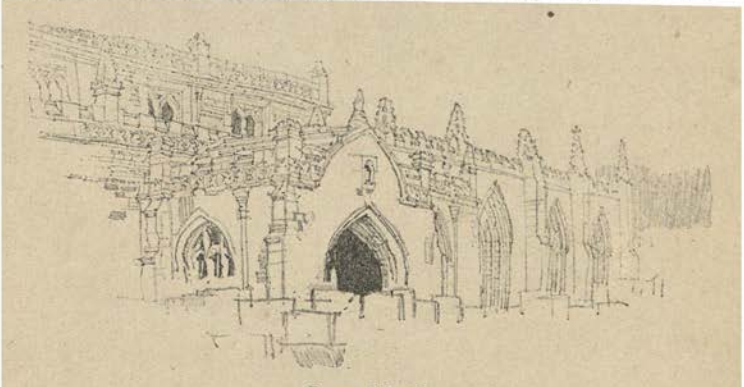
over to Bunny, when the poet was living a few miles away, at Kegworth, to be near his patron, the Marquis of Hastings. So, in 1827, his lordship drove Moore over to see Newstead, when he was busy writing Byron's life, and frightened him considerably on the way back in the dark, because the horse was "most formidably skittish and near running away with us twice." Moore says that he spent part of the time at Bunny in correcting some sheets of "Lalla Rookh" for a new edition, then just coming out, and he quotes with great complacence the compliments paid by the ladies to his singing after dinner.

Lord Rancliffe, who quarrelled desperately with all his family, had three sisters. The eldest married Sir Richard Levinge of Westmeath; the second married Sir William Rumbold; and the third became the wife first of the Marquis de Choiseul, and secondly of Prince Auguste de Polignac, the luckless Minister of Charles X. of France. Thus there was no lack of close relatives, but Lord Rancliffe left the life interest in the whole estate to the lady who for many years had been the ruling mistress at Bunny Hall. Mrs. Forteath, for so she afterwards became by marriage, died in 1875, leaving Bunny to her niece, who married a Nottingham lace manufacturer, Mr. Wilkinson Smith. Thus, for half a century, Bunny remained in alien hands, so far as the Parkyns family was concerned, and when a few years ago it reverted—under the terms of the last lord's will—to the heir of the last Lord Rancliffe's eldest sister, he only came down to Bunny for a day to make arrangements for the sale. The famous Hoppners went up to Christie's and fetched fabulous sums, the furniture was ruthlessly sold off at auction, and the whole estate was speculatively bought and carved up for profitable sale. *Sic transit gloria Bunny!* There is nothing exceptional in such a fate, but it is not a little pitiful when such an old-standing connection of family and place is roughly severed thus.

As already stated, Lord Rancliffe's second sister married Sir William Rumbold. One of his sons was the late Sir Horace Rumbold, for some years British Ambassador at Vienna. In his "Reminiscences" he described, with great humour and gusto, how as a young man he went down to Bunny to make his uncle's acquaintance, hoping that his relative would take kindly to him, and thus heal the family feud. But the future diplomatist blundered badly. His uncle, indeed, received him

most genially, but the very next morning young Rumbold happened to take a horse out of the stables which belonged to the imperious mistress of the Hall. She met him and spoke her mind. Not knowing who she was, he answered with equal spirit, and the result was that when he returned to the Hall his uncle promptly told him to clear out at once. Thus abruptly ended his golden hopes.

Bunny Hall itself might not inaptly be called Crazy Hall. It is an incongruous medley of incongruous styles. Brick, stone, stucco—you can find samples of everything at Bunny. The great Sir Thomas prided himself on being his own architect, and his tall brick tower, which is the Hall's principal feature,



Bunny Church.

seems expressly designed for no other purpose than to show off in plaster the Parkyns' elaborate coat of arms. The park, which old Sir Thomas surrounded with a brick wall, built on arches, three miles round and completed in three years, is as compact as any in the county, and in the old days its coverts were famous. The village itself is of warm red brick, for Sir Thomas loved to see his dependants well housed, and the school which he built for the children, and the almshouses for the old folk at its side, are a joy to look upon. This old school is now turned into the village institute and a new one has been erected at its side. It is, of course, as ugly as the other is beautiful. That is the modern way. And yet there

was a motto on the original school wall which might have given the education authorities a pause: "*Scientia non habet inimicum nisi ignorantem.*"

The church is one of the most beautiful fabrics in the county. Its glory is its exquisite chancel—full of radiant white light—the building of which, in the far-off fourteenth century, was interrupted for several years by the Black Death which carried off half the population of England. There are fine sedilia and a double piscina and everywhere on the walls are memorials of the bygone rulers of Bunny Hall. Until lately, the huge monument to the wrestling baronet stood in the chancel. Now reforming zeal has swept it down to the end of the church. It is an ugly monument—no one will deny that—and modern ecclesiastical taste may not think it seemly for a chancel. But if ever a worthy benefactor deserved, by his kindly charities and original wit, the place in a chancel which he desired for his monument it was Sir Thomas Parkyns. "Good friend! for Jesu's sake forbeare!" Poor Sir Thomas! To be turned out of the chancel thus after all these years and after building the "Vicaridge House." It was an act of shocking ingratitude.

CHAPTER VI

WILLOUGHBY-ON-THE-WOLDS; THE FOSSE WAY; STANTON; THE HUTCHINSONS AT OWTHORPE; COLSTON BASSETT

A LONG two miles to the south-east of Bunny is Wysall, a rural village subject to little change from year to year, aloof and remote, with no "taint," as people used to say, of any industry but that of agriculture. The parish is united to its more important neighbour, Willoughby, and its trim, well-placed church possesses many features of interest. It has a wooden mediaeval pulpit—dating from about 1400—which, after being discarded for a modern one of stone, has happily been restored to its rightful use. It has also a beautiful old oak screen, with curious and most unusual quatrefoil holes in the panels. Note, too, a painted oak memorial tablet to Mr. George Widmerpoole (d. 1689) and the fine alabaster tomb of Hugh Armstrong and his wife. But the whole building is full of light and interest and is of admirable workmanship. There is no big house at Wysall now. But the Armstrong tomb shows that there were resident gentry at one time, and William Sampson, the poet, wrote an elegy on Henry Worrall, of Wysall, whom he described as "The Mappe of Charitie." These villages, however, on the Nottinghamshire wolds have dwindled sadly in population—it is a stiff clay soil, little suited in these days for arable farming—and Wysall has not escaped the general fate. Still, it has been much more fortunate than the next village of Thorpe-in-the-Glebe, for that has wholly vanished, including its church, which in its last degenerate days served as an ale-house. A surprising number of churches have been destroyed in this neighbourhood. Flawford Church, near Ruddington, after fifty years of disuse, was pulled down in 1773 by a party of colliers from Wollaton. Bradmore Church, near Bunny, was burned in 1706, and never rebuilt, though the tower escaped and is still standing. The

church at Saxondale, near Bingham, was destroyed by the Stanhopes to escape the cost of its maintenance, and that at Adbolton, in 1746, for a similar reason. Waning population was doubtless assigned as the excuse. The old church at Kinoulton, on the Fosse Way, was abandoned because of its inconvenient situation, but in that case a new one was built near the village.

Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, which lies close on the Leicestershire border, is a place of considerable historic interest. Its chief visible attraction is its church, a roomy and well-restored building, containing a fourteenth-century mortuary chapel, where lie the tombs of several of the Willoughbys. The effigy by the north wall, in the dress of a judge, is that of Sir Richard de Willoughby, Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1327. He married Isabella de Mortein, and through her became possessed of Wollaton, near Nottingham, which has been associated with the Willoughby family from that day to this. The double tomb in the middle of the little chapel is that of Sir Hugh Willoughby, who died in 1448. An heiress of the Frevilles brought him the Middleton estate in Warwickshire, from which the head of the family took his title when ennobled in the reign of Queen Anne. The manor-house of the Willoughbys, whence this noted family sprang, survives, at any rate in part, in the cottages and farmhouses on the south side of the church, which have been subdivided out of the original building.

Close by these Willoughby tombs, on the floor of the north aisle, is a small brass with the inscription "Collonell Michaell Stanhope, slayne in Willoughby Field in the month of July, 1648. A Souldier for King Charles the First." This Colonel Stanhope was one of the Stanhopes of Shelford, whom we shall meet in a later chapter, and the fight in which he fell was the last splutter of the second Civil War in Nottinghamshire during the summer of 1648. By that time the main issue had long been decided, and the King was a close prisoner in the Isle of Wight. But while Cromwell was absent in Scotland a strong party of Royalists had seized hold of Pontefract Castle, and for a time raided the countryside far and wide. Sir John Digby, Sir Hugh Cartwright, and a number of other gentry from Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, had flocked thither, and Sir John Monckton planned a daring raid for the relief of Colchester, which was still holding out against the Parliament.

With a force of 400 horse and 200 foot he crossed the Trent by ferry at some point not named, and, marching upon Lincoln, took the city without a blow. Then, with such booty as they had taken and such recruits as they had attracted, the raiders moved down to Gainsborough. By this time, however, Colonel Rossiter, commanding the Parliamentary garrison at Belvoir had got news of the foray, and giving the alarm to all the other Parliamentary forces within reach, he boldly marched on Gainsborough, only to find that Monckton had slipped past him and was heading for Newark. Following hard, he located the enemy on the Tuesday evening in quarters at Bingham, they having crossed the Trent on the previous Friday.

From this point it is best to give the story in the words of the actual despatch to the Parliament at Westminster :—

" On Wednesday morning Rossiter commanded out a forlorn hope, 150 of the ablest horse, under the command of Captain Champion of Notts, to pursue at a fast rate and so, by falling on the enemy's rear, to enforce them to a stand on halt till he, with the body of horse, could come up to them. They, after seven miles advance, overtooke the rear of them whom skirmishing with made their body of horse and foot consisting of 7 or 800 at least to draw up in a large bean field belonging to Willoughby, 7 miles from Nottingham. On which Rossiter, being informed from the commander of the forlorn, by marching at a full trot (having no dragoons or foot with him) within a short time brought his horse into the field, himself commanding the right wing, wherein he resolved to charge.

" But observing that the enemy's strength was placed in their body, consisting of a party of foot winged with horse, and those horse flanked with musketeers, and that with them the men of best quality (as appeared by their outward garbes) seemed to be mounted, he resolved to charge the Battaile, assigning his right wing to be commanded by Col. White and the left wing by Col. Hacker, placing 2 reserves of horse in the rear, being suddenly thus ordered, the enemy's word (" Jesus ") and Rossiter's (" Fairfax ") he advanced to the charge, which was received with much resolution. The bodies and reserves through eagerness closed together, whereby the encounter proved very sharp, both sides falling presently to sword's point, and so continued in close fight, neither party giving ground for some space, till, by the fierceness of each party, both were put into

disorder, being so intermixed doing execution each on other, the dispute continued a while doubtful.

" At last it pleased God to give a full and absolute victory to Rossiter's forces, as may appear by the quality and number of prisoners taken, all their colours, arms and carriages. About 200 that were best horsed (whereof diverse papists) got off in small parties, several of them wounded, but at least 100 of them were that night and next morning taken in their flight by Leicester, Belvoir, Budby and other honest county men, amongst whom was Sir Philip Mounkton, their General, disarmed and brought into Nottingham by Mr. Boyer, a high Constable of that county, who deservedly now wears his sword.

" In the first charge Col. Rossiter lost his head-piece, received a shot through the right thigh, and some other painful wounds with a musket bullet, notwithstanding which he kept the field fighting, till he saw the battle wholly won, not discovering his wounds to any person, for fear it might prove a discourage to the soldiers ; after which, ready to fall through loss of blood, he rode to Nottingham, where he lieth capable of recovery through the blessing of God upon the means used to that end. In this service Col. Hacker (commander of the Leicester horse) who is wounded, and Col. White (commander of the Nottingham horse, having only his nose cut) merited much for their expressed valour."

Colonel Rossiter's force, which had been newly enlisted, lost thirty killed, including a cornet ; while Monckton's losses were " 44 gentlemen of quality," 500 prisoners, 10 colours of horse and foot and 7 carriages of arms. It was a sharp engagement and the fierceness of the fighting for a while may be gauged from the fact that Rossiter's own colours were captured by the Royalists but recovered by Cornet Ridgeley, a " reformado " in the same troop. It is clear from the despatch that the raiders came along from Newark by the Fosse Way, and that Rossiter had been hurriedly joined by troops from Leicester and Nottingham.

Sir Philip Monckton, whose daring foray came to such an untimely end, ascribed his capture after the battle to the fact that he was unable to use his right arm and was obliged to hold his bridle in his mouth. He thus could not control his horse, and fell into the hands of the enemy. He had received his wound at Rowton Heath, in Cheshire, and before then had seen service

for the King at Hessey Moor, Aderton Moor, and the fatal field of Marston. This foray from Pontefract—if Colchester were its real objective—never stood the slightest chance of success, and the idea did greater credit to the courage of those who took part in it than to their intelligence. It is not stated how many men Colonel Rossiter had under his command, but the probabilities are that, though considerably outnumbered, he fought with the sure conviction of success. The actual site of the encounter has not been identified. The local tradition is that the bean field was near the church, but the church is nearly a mile from the Fosse Way, and it is much more probable that Monckton, in choosing his ground for a stand, chose one which would give him the Fosse for an immediate line of retreat.

Such is the story of Willoughby Field. But Willoughby's historical connections range back to a far earlier date than the Civil War. For quite close at hand there runs the old Roman Fosse Way, and at the cross-roads half a mile out of the village is the site of the station of Vernometum, which the old tradition of the district used to call "Long Billington." The Fosse Way was the great highway which crossed England from near Exeter in the west to Lincoln and the Humber. It bisected the Watling Street at High Cross, came on to Leicester (Ratae) and thence made straight towards Willoughby. Entering Nottinghamshire at Six Hills, a well-known rendezvous of the Quorn, it still serves for two miles as boundary of a narrow tongue of Nottinghamshire which projects sharply into Leicestershire. From the cross-roads here it continues in almost undeviating line to a point just beyond Owthorpe Borders, and then bears sharply away to the right down into the Trent Valley, crossing the Nottingham and Grantham Road near Bingham and then making straight towards Newark. In the "Itinerary" of Antoninus its stations are set out as follows :—

Ratae (Leicester);
Vernometum (Willoughby);
Margidunum (near E. Bridgford);
Ad Pontem;
Crococolanum (Brough);
Lindum (Lincoln).

Much controversy has raged from time to time over the identification of these stations, but the authorities have now

reached agreement in respect of all but Ad Pontem. This may have been a mere direction mark which crept into the itinerary, as though it were the name of a station. But whether the bridge was at East Bridgford, or Thorpe or Farndon, is a matter of hot dispute—though the probabilities greatly favour East Bridgford. The passage of the Trent at Gunthorpe, leading to the road through Lowdham and Oxton, was certainly of very great antiquity and importance. But these things are for the archaeologists to settle, if they can. Our interest is in the road itself. Until the last few years all this part of the Fosse Way, from the Six Hills right down to near Bingham, was simply a broad green track, which had lost its traffic, except for an occasional farmer's cart. It stood almost as forlorn as a derelict canal, save when the hunt passed that way, or when some foot traveller followed its beckoning call. In the last few years, however, the road has been re-metalled and it is now a glorious highway for motorists, who can travel along it at top speed, with no need to blow their horns for miles together. One of the most conspicuous features of this Fosse Way is that there are no villages along its track. They lie well back to right and left, rarely visible. What a contrast to modern ideas! But for long centuries safety lay off the highway. Soldiers marched on highways —all other tracks being impassable in winter—and robbers skulked along them, and so it was much safer to live out of sight, and in those days men dwelt where they were born, and only left their villages on the rarest occasions. Still it is a curious fact that from Six Hills right away to East Stoke, near Newark, not a single village has sprung up on the Fosse Way, though the last few miles never dropped out of general use like the first ten.

We will follow this Fosse Way across the Midland Railway to the New Inn, near Widmerpool station, and thence for a long mile to where a by-lane on the left leads to Stanton-in-the-Wolds. This hamlet calls for a passing reference, though practically all that remains is a tiny church and a few farms and cottages. The church is so small that it has to be searched for with diligence, before it is found hidden away in a field behind an old farmhouse. When Throsby visited it about 1795 it was in a shocking state. "It is," said he, "of all others within and without the most despicable place I ever beheld. One family only, I was told, goes to the church on the Sabbath." Restored in 1899, it is now

quite neat and trim, but contains nothing of interest save some gravestones of the Parsons family, who lived here during the eighteenth century. Sir John Parsons, of Langley, in Hertfordshire, married in 1664 Catherine Clifton, a co-heiress of Sir William Clifton, and Stanton was part of her inheritance. So as he and his house had been impoverished by the Civil Wars, he sold Langley and came to live here in the old manor-house, part of which now survives in the farm house near the church. The last baronet died in 1812.

By far the most notorious member of the family, however, was a rascally son of one of the earlier baronets, who, after a very ill-spent youth, was hanged at Tyburn in 1751. He began his evil career quite early. When a boy at Eton, he stole a five guinea piece from his brother, for which offence he was "whipt till the skin flea'd off his back and rubbed with pickle." Then he stole a pair of gold buckles at Buxton and sold them at Nottingham. Then he entered the navy, but was compelled to leave, and in 1740 married a rich heiress. While her money lasted, all was well, but in 1748 he was convicted of forgery and transported to America, and was very much offended with the captain because he refused to allow him a place at his table. When he got to Maryland, Lord Fairfax the Governor took an interest in him, gave him a horse to ride and treated him as his son, but the base return he made was to forge his benefactor's name and get away with the money. Parsons took ship back to England and "lived retired near Hyde Park Corner," but soon took to the road and began to hold up travellers between Turnham Green and Hounslow Heath. He was caught in a very curious way. As he hovered round a postchaise on its way to Hounslow, he was recognised by one of its occupants, who happened to be the very man who had previously prosecuted him for forgery and secured his conviction. Parsons did not actually stop the chaise — apparently because it had two passengers—but he was impudent enough to follow it right into Hounslow and was seized at the inn. On being sentenced to death for returning from transportation, Parsons wrote to his father begging for help, but the baronet coldly replied: "If he would have a divine he would order him one, but as for any other supply he must not expect that he would support an extravagance." So young Parsons was turned off at Tyburn, and hanged so effectually that though some friends tried to

bring him round by opening his neck, when they cut him down, the hangman was not to be cheated. He was buried in St. Pancras Churchyard, and "a genuine impartial account" of his life, villainies and suffering, was soon after published by the booksellers. Such is the story! How does it appear in the pages of Burke? Thus: "William, lieutenant in Col. Cholmondeley's regiment of Foot, m. Mary d. of John Frampton, of the Exchequer." Oh, great discretion! There is no Tyburn Tree, standing gaunt on the skyline, in the vision of Burke. Even the pages of the extinct baronetage are not to be sullied by mention of Newgate.

Just beyond the by-lane to Stanton is a single house called Lodge-on-the-Wolds, which forms a parish in itself, and those who care to search on the right of the Fosse Way may find the site of old Kinoulton Church. Three miles from the New Inn, and just beyond a large plantation on the right, known as Owthorpe Borders, familiar to all followers of the South Notts Hunt, the Fosse is crossed by a slanting by-road which drops steeply down the hill to Owthorpe. It is a quick fall, which affords as lovely a view of the Vale of Belvoir across to the Belvoir Heights as you will find for all your searching, and there is no richer or greener valley in the whole of England. And here just at your feet, quietly tucked away in the shelter of the hill is the little village of Owthorpe. To-day it is nothing but a sequestered hamlet of a few farms and cottages, with a church so small and unassuming that it can easily be missed. There is no big house. It looks a sleepy hollow which has never known disturbance. Yet Owthorpe was the home of Colonel Hutchinson, Governor of Nottingham Castle during the Civil Wars, and this remote village continually echoed with the tramp of armed parties of Cavaliers and Roundheads all through that troubled time.

The Hutchinsons were people of note in the county. Colonel Hutchinson's father, Sir Thomas Hutchinson, was Member of Parliament for Nottingham, and married first a daughter of Sir John Byron, of Newstead, and secondly, a daughter of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston. The Hutchinsons, therefore, belonged to the best company, and the Colonel himself married in 1638 a daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, Lieutenant of the Tower of London. He was thus closely connected with some of the leading Royalist families of the Midlands, and judged himself

to be fully their equal in social position. Sir Thomas had been against war, but was "clearly on the Parliament side," and the Colonel, while a convinced Parliamentarian, was by no means an extremist. He did good service to the Parliament before Charles raised his standard by preventing Lord Newark from seizing for the king the magazine in the Nottingham town hall, which belonged to the trained bands of the county, and when the war began in earnest he left Owthorpe and went in to Nottingham for protection. It was a wise step, for Owthorpe lay very near to Wiverton, and all the gentry of the immediate vicinity were strong uncompromising Royalists. Owthorpe Hall, therefore, was left untenanted, and it was freely pillaged of all its contents by raiding parties of Cavaliers. The worse matters were going for them elsewhere, the greater would be their satisfaction in harrying the goods of the Governor of Nottingham Castle.

When the war was over, Colonel Hutchinson returned to Owthorpe. Pained by the use to which Cromwell had put his triumph, he gave the Long Parliament as wide a berth as he dared and devoted himself to his family estate. The Hall stood close to the church; a heap of mounds still marks the site, and a few scant remains may be seen of the avenues which he planted. It was a handsome house, with a large hall occupying the entire centre of the building, and a wide staircase leading up to a gallery and ball-room above.

"The western side of the house was covered by the offices, a small village, and a church, interspersed with many trees. The south, which was the front entrance, looked over a large extent of grass grounds which were the demesne, and were bounded by hills covered with wood which Colonel Hutchinson had planted. On the eastern side, the entertaining rooms opened on to a terrace, which encircled a very large bowling-green or level lawn; next to this had been a flower garden, and next to that a shrubbery, now become a wood, through which vistas were cut to let in a view of Langar, the seat of Lord Howe, at two miles', and of Belvoir Castle, at seven miles' distance, which, as the afternoon sun set full upon it, made a glorious object: at the further end of this small wood was a spot (of about ten acres) which appeared to have been a morass, and through which ran a rivulet: this spot Colonel Hutchinson had dug into a great number of canals, and planted

the ground between them, leaving room for walks, so that the whole formed at once a wilderness or bower, reservoirs for fish, and a decoy for wild fowl. To the north, at some hundred yards distance was a lake of water, which, filling the space between two quarters of woodland, appeared, as viewed from the large window of the hall, like a moderate river, and beyond this the eye rested on the wolds or high wilds which accompany the Fosse Way towards Newark."

Such is a description of Owthorpe Hall by one who saw it early in the nineteenth century, after it had lain empty for forty years and shortly before its purchase and demolition by Sir Henry Bromley of Stoke. It was here that Colonel Hutchinson and his devoted wife dwelt during "Oliver's mutable reign," devoted to pictures, music, hawking, and the planting of trees. Trouble came even before the Restoration, when Lambert and his soldiers were in the neighbourhood, for six of Lambert's troopers were so insolent that the Colonel drew a sword upon two of them to chastise them. But at the Restoration the household at Owthorpe stood in direst peril. Hutchinson's name appeared on the warrant for Charles's execution; and though he was eventually included in the act of oblivion, his house was plundered during his absence and he was compelled to restore the pictures which he had bought out of the late King's collection at a cost of between £1,000 and £1,500. His enemies continued their activities, and prominent amongst them, according to Lucy Hutchinson, was "a light-headed, debauched young knight, living in the next town." This was Sir Francis Golding, of Colston Bassett, who had raised a company of Papists for the King. Possibly he owed the Colonel a grudge for the ferocity of the storm at Shelford, where every Papist was put ruthlessly to the sword. At any rate, Golding lost no opportunity of harrying the Hutchinsons at Owthorpe, now that their party was down and his was up, and he laid information, whereby an excuse was furnished for searching the house for arms. A troop came over from Newark after sunset and searched every cranny, and then, though it was "as bitter a stormy, pitchy, dark, black, rainy night as any that year," they insisted on carrying the Colonel back to Newark, which they did not reach till four o'clock in the morning. While he was kept under lock and key, Owthorpe was again ransacked for evidence against its owner, who was only permitted to return home in order to prepare for

his journey up to London to answer his accusers. "They were forced," says Lucy Hutchinson in her memoir, "to stay a day at Owthorpe for the mending of the coach and the coming in of the soldiers, when the Colonel had the opportunity to take leave of his poor labourers, who all wept bitterly when he paid them off; but he comforted them and smiled, and without any regret went away from his bitterly weeping children and servants and tenants, his wife and his eldest son and daughter going with him, upon Saturday, the 31st October, 1663." Golding, we are told, sent the Colonel "a pot of marmalade to eat in the coach," and "as the Colonel passed his door (at Colston Bassett) he came out with wine and would fain have brought him into the house to eat oysters, but the Colonel only drank with him and bid him friendly farewell, and went on, not guarded as a prisoner, but waited on by his neighbours."

Such was the Colonel's leave-taking of his well-loved home. He never saw it again. In less than a year he was dead, his end beyond doubt being hastened by the infamous quarters allotted to him at Sandown, Dover and Deal. He died like a gallant gentleman and a true Christian. "Fie, Bab," said he to his daughter, "do you mourn for me as for one without hope? There is hope." His brave wife took the body back to Owthorpe in "a hearse tricked with escutcheons" and six horses in mourning, "and he was brought home with honour," his wife proudly added, "through the dominions of his murderers, who were ashamed of his glories, which their tyrannies could not extinguish with his life." With those triumphant words Lucy Hutchinson closed her memoir of her husband. On his monument in the little church she wrote "*Quousque Domine?*" and the long inscription ended, "He died at Sandowne Castle, in Kent, after 11 months' harsh and strict imprisonment—without crime or accusation—upon the 11th day of Sept., 1664, in the 49th year of his age, full of joy, in the assured hope of a glorious resurrection."

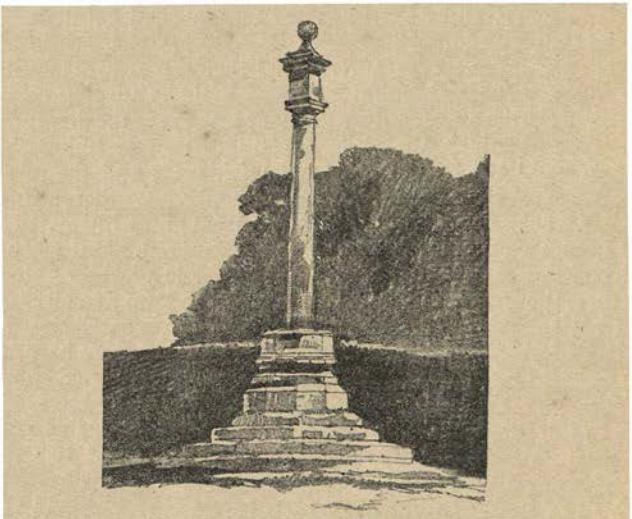
It is worth while to dwell a moment upon the very remarkable book which Mrs. Hutchinson wrote here and at Lowesby, in Leicestershire. Her object, of course, was to immortalise the memory of a husband whom she idolised and in whom she would not allow the slightest imperfection. She was a much fiercer partisan than he ever was, and, therefore, her narrative needs to be read with caution, but even that does not lessen the delight of

perusal. For it is a live book, written by a clever and warm-hearted woman, and invaluable as a picture of the times of the Civil War. But how came she to write it? I have not the slightest doubt that the idea was suggested by the memoir of the Duke of Newcastle, written by his adoring Duchess. Lucy Hutchinson would determine that if the story of the Cavalier and his Lady was received with so much applause, she would see what she could do with the theme of a Parliament Colonel. So it is quite possible that we have to thank Mad Madge, not merely for her own extraordinary book, but for this other volume, which emulation and wifely devotion inspired Lucy Hutchinson to write. Strangely enough, it never saw the light until 1806. Mrs. Hutchinson, for obvious reasons, could not publish it in her own lifetime. The manuscript, like the Owthorpe property, seems to have passed into the possession, not of the Colonel's own children, but of his half-brother, a son of Sir Thomas Hutchinson by Lady Catherine Stanhope. Lady Catherine was an ardent Royalist who lived at Nottingham to the great age of 102, and her son was Royalist too. They had thus no interest in giving to the world a book written in vindication of a Regicide's memory, and so it remained unpublished till little more than a century ago.

Those who have ever surrendered themselves to its spell are not likely to pass through Owthorpe without turning aside to the little church and sparing a moment just to see the descendants of the trees which the Colonel planted, now standing rather forlorn amid the fragments of old brick walls and the mounds which are all that is left of a goodly house. Owthorpe Church itself is a shapeless sort of fragment, within and without. There has been a church there from time immemorial. But when the old building was taken down in the middle of the eighteenth century, the material was used over again to form a small church, and ancient windows were thrust into Georgian walls with the oddest effect. Inside, the Church resembles a square barn, with the ugliest and heaviest screen in the county, painted to make it look uglier and heavier still. There is a fine Jacobean pulpit, —a two-decker—and over the west door is a mediaeval corbel, with two angels holding a shield. The monument to Colonel Hutchinson is on the north wall.

A little to the east of Owthorpe, across the Grantham Canal which winds and writhes its way through this district like a

wounded snake, is the pretty village of Colston Bassett, which is said to derive its name of Bassett from Ralph Bassett, Chief Justice of England in the reign of Henry I. It is charmingly situated on the River Smite and the Hall stands in a pleasantly-wooded park, which is bounded by a quadrilateral of high roads. Here lived, as we have just seen, the Roman Catholic family of the Goldings, the head of which was rewarded with a Baronetcy by Charles I. The title, however, speedily became extinct, and the estate has since passed through many hands. Colston Bassett is best known of recent years for the shocking act of vandalism which was perpetrated when the old church, which stood in the park, was dismantled. The church was one of the most interesting in this part of the county, with a fine peal of bells and a good screen, but the inconvenience of the situation and the pleasure of the squire were the deciding factors. So Colston Bassett now has a handier but wholly uninteresting church. Even the old screen was given away and is now at Hathern, in Leicestershire. That these things could have been permitted by authority little more than twenty years ago almost passes belief.



Colston Bassett Cross.

CHAPTER VII

LANGAR; THE HOWE FAMILY; SAMUEL BUTLER; WIVERTON HALL

CLOSE to Colston Bassett is Langar, which now consists of little more than a fine old church, with a small hall hidden in the trees at its side. The village has shrunk to a hamlet. But great names attach to Langar, which has been the cradle of illustrious men. "In Langar village," wrote Leland, "hard by the church is a stone house of the Lord Scropes, embattled like a castle." That was in the sixteenth century, and the Scropes were the lords of Bolton, that plain square castle with its back to the Yorkshire moors which commands the broad vale of Wensleydale. It came into their hands through one of the three heiresses of the Tiptofts, who had been committed as wards to the care of Richard le Scrope, and their guardian had thought that the safest way of securing their interests was to marry his son Roger to the eldest. The Langar estate belonged to the Scropes until the reign of Charles I., when the owner was created Earl of Sunderland. He had no issue by his lawful wife, so he left his properties to be divided among his three natural daughters, the youngest of whom, Annabella, married John, second son of Sir John Howe, of Compton, in the county of Gloucester, and thus started the long association of Langar with the name of Howe.

There is a charming portrait in verse of this John Howe from the pen of the Royalist poet, Shipman, who lived in the neighbourhood in a cottage belonging to the Honourable Mrs. Chaworth, the mistress of Wiverton Hall. All the rent the poet paid was an annual birthday poem in the lady's praise. Shipman entitles his poem, "The Perfect Gentleman: John Howe of Langar. 1678."

So true a patriot:—It was his care
His Prince's and his Country's love to share,
No Favourite and yet no Popular.

So kind a Husband, his fair Lady knew
No carriage, but like that when he did woo,
All he did then pretend, he since made true.

So good a Parent, it may raise debate,
Which of his gifts may claim the higher rate,
Their Life, his great Example or Estate.

He was the bravest foe, the truest Friend,
That ever Love or anger did pretend,
Both which with Justice did begin and end.

To all in want he favours did bestow,
His Charity, like Nilus, did o'erflow,
And made the neighbouring barren soils to grow.

His conversation pleasant was and good:
And like to Israel's heavenly manna proved:
To all delicious, yet substantial food.

There is no false flattery there. The pleasant conceits of the poet have for once an honest ring about them. John Howe was evidently a Cavalier of the Falkland type, but born to a happier fate. His wife, it is interesting to observe, was legitimatised by Act of Parliament—omnipotent Parliament!—in 1663, and lies buried in Stowell Church, Gloucestershire.

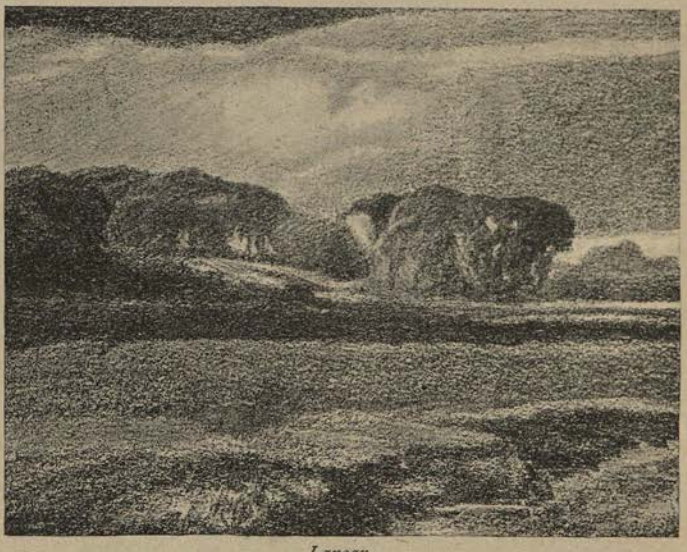
From this pair sprang an extraordinary quartette of sons, each one of whom rose to fame. The eldest son, Scrope, was a fierce, uncompromising Whig, who sat for the county from 1673 to 1698, and in company with the Earl of Devonshire and other magnates, rode into Nottingham market one day in 1688 and proclaimed the Glorious Revolution. He was a Groom of the Bedchamber to William III. and Surveyor-General of the roads, and was raised to the peerage of Ireland in 1701 as Baron Glenawley and Viscount Howe. The second brother, usually known as "Jack Howe," had a much more adventurous career. He wrote lampoons and satires, and spoke so savagely in the House of Commons on the Bill which was brought in to distribute the forfeited Irish estates among the King's friends, that King William remarked that but for their disparity in station he would have demanded personal satisfaction. The two special objects of his invective were foreign settlers, meaning King William's Dutchmen, and standing armies. He got sundry offices, but no title, though his son and heir became Lord

Chedworth. The third brother, Charles, after a successful diplomatic career, renounced the world upon the death of his wife and devoted the rest of his life to religious meditation. His best known work, "Devout Meditations," written for his own use, held a high place among the pietistic literature of the eighteenth century. The fourth brother, Emanuel, entered the army and rose to be a lieutenant-general; then he sat in several Parliaments and finally became Envoy Extraordinary to the Elector of Hanover. He married Ruperta, natural daughter of Prince Rupert by Mistress Margaret Hughes, the Drury Lane actress, and she bore him four sons and two daughters.

Such was the first notable brood of the Howes of Langar. We will only briefly follow the fortunes of the elder line. The first Viscount Howe died in 1712, and was buried in Langar Church; the second viscount married the eldest daughter of Baroness Kielmansegge—whose name, not unnaturally, was a favourite butt with English satirists. For the baroness was the mistress of George I., who raised her to the peerage as the Countess of Darlington, and she passed on the lineaments of her father to the most distinguished of her three sons. The eldest son, the third viscount, fell on the fatal field of Ticonderoga, where a well-found British army blundered into a trap through the obstinacy of its general and his refusal to regard the warnings of his Colonial lieutenants. The second son was Admiral Howe, who succeeded to the viscounty on his brother's death and was made an earl of the United Kingdom and Baron Howe of Langar. The third son was the general. He, in his young days, led the forlorn hope of twenty-four men who forced the path by which Wolfe scaled the heights of Abraham. He commanded the British Army in America from 1775 till his resignation in 1778, but his conduct of the operations was fiercely criticised at the time and later historians have scarcely been more kind. An American writer has observed of him that he always had a mortgage on Washington's army, but never could make up his mind to foreclose. If he had attacked Washington's starving force in their winter quarters at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777–8, it is hard to see how they could have escaped destruction.

While he was in command on land, his brother was commander-in-chief on the American naval station, but both complained bitterly that they were not properly supported at home.

Neither, therefore, won any new laurels in America. The admiral's triumphs were gained over the French, and his crowning victory was that of the Glorious First of June, 1794, when seven French ships of the line were taken and six were towed in triumph into Spithead. Howe was offered a marquisate but refused, and the king bestowed the Garter upon him in 1797. Two years later he died and was buried at Langar in



Langar.

the family vault. Among sailors his nickname was "Black Dick," and Wraxall noted his strong facial resemblance to his grandfather, George I. "Undaunted as a rock and as silent," was Walpole's happy description of the greatest of the Howes. The English viscounty and earldom died with him; the Irish viscounty passed to his brother, the general, and expired with him in 1814, and only the English barony passed—by special remainder—to his eldest daughter, who married Penn Assheton Curzon. The present earldom of Howe was re-created in 1821 in favour of this daughter's son.

Only one historical document relating to the long connection of this family with the county remains to be quoted. It is the manifesto which Charlotte Howe, widow of the second viscount, issued in 1758, "To the Gentlemen, clergy, freeholders and burgesses of the town and county of Nottingham."

"As Lord Howe is now absent upon the public service, and Lieut.-Col. Howe is with his regiment at Louisbourg, it rests upon me to beg the favour of your votes and interests that Lieut-Col. Howe may supply the place of his late brother, as your representative in Parliament.

"Permit me, therefore, to implore the protection of everyone of you as the mother of him, whose life has been lost in the service of his country."

What a chapter of history lies in that manifesto! At what exciting events it briefly glances! And with what extraordinary brevity it is framed! The vacancy was due to the tragic death of Viscount Howe at Ticonderoga. The youngest brother was with Wolfe in Canada. The new Viscount was with the fleet raiding the coast of France. So the mother of the gallant three comes forward and pleads with the electors to send the absent Colonel to take his dead brother's place in the House of Commons. Of course, he was elected, and both town and county must have swelled with pride as they read next year that it was their own member who had led the way up the perilous path from the St. Lawrence and was probably the first to set foot on the Plains of Abraham! There would be no distinction of Whig or Tory in Langar or in Nottingham when that glorious news came through.

Little is left of the mansion of the Howes which stood close to the church. When the property was sold, the hall was partly occupied for a time by a farmer, and then pulled down and the park divided up into fields. The present Hall is modern, and much smaller than the old. But the Howes are not the only family which has shed lustre on Langar. At the rectory, a fine, spacious, red-brick parsonage of the eighteenth century type, was born in 1835 one of the most caustic wits and keenest intellects of the nineteenth century. This was Samuel Butler, best known, perhaps—though not nearly so well known as his brilliant originality deserves—as the author of "Erewhon" and "Erewhon Revisited." Butler's father, the Rev. Thomas Butler, son of Samuel Butler, the famous Headmaster of Shrews-

bury, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, went to Langar in 1834. Young Butler himself went to Shrewsbury under Dr. Kennedy and thence to Cambridge, and his father, an evangelical of the narrowest and strictest type, pressed him to enter the ministry. But doubts began to assail him as to the efficacy of infant baptism, and Butler, quarrelling with his father, went off to New Zealand, and made a modest fortune in sheep-rearing. Returning to England in 1864, he settled down in chambers in Clifford's Inn, which he tenanted for 38 years to his death, and after studying art for a time, devoted himself to literature and spent his days, year in, year out, in the British Museum, varied only by long visits to Italy. Butler was a born iconoclast, who ran full tilt against all established conventions in art, religion, science and literature, and he had in him much of the mordant temper of Swift. He tells the story of his life in "The Way of All Flesh," a sort of auto-biographical novel which was published after his death. It is an exceedingly painful book, for it is his own spiritual career which he traces in that of Ernest Pontifex, and the terrible portrait of Theobald represents his father. Butler evidently suffered poignant torture during his early upbringing, but for very charity it may be hoped that home life at Langar Rectory was not quite so bad as that of the household of the Rev. Theobald Pontifex and Christina his wife. The book could only have been written by one whose heart had been turned to exceeding bitterness by the miseries he had undergone as "a happy Christian child" born in that particular type of home. Butler's sarcasms are as cutting as anything in "Gulliver's Travels," but "The Way of All Flesh" is not relieved, as is Dean Swift's masterpiece, by the lighter touch of humour. Langar figures as Battersby-on-the-Hill in the novel, and in one passage Butler speaks of the church as "an interesting specimen of late Norman with some early English additions," which in his early days had been suffered to fall into a very bad state and was repaired by his father.

"Even now I can see the men in blue smock-frocks reaching to their heels and more than one old woman in a scarlet cloak; the row of stolid, dull, vacant plough-boys, ungainly in build, uncomely in face, lifeless, apathetic, a race a good deal more like the pre-revolution French peasant as described by Carlyle than it is pleasant to reflect upon. . . . They shamble in one after another, with steaming breath, for it is winter, and

loud clattering of hob-nailed boots; they beat the snow from off them as they enter and through the opened door I catch a momentary glimpse of a dreary leaden sky and snow-clad tombstones. . . . They bob to Theobald as they passed the reading desk ("The people hereabouts are truly respectful," whispered Christina to me, "they know their betters,") and take their seats in a long row against the wall. The choir clamber up into the gallery with their instruments—a violincello, a clarinet and a trombone. I see them and soon I hear them, for there is a hymn before the service, a wild strain, a remnant, if I mistake not, of some pre-Reformation litany."

The reference to the blue smock-frocks is interesting. These were a local product, for they came from Newark, only a few miles away, where there was a house famous for their manufacture. The speciality lay not so much in the smocking as in the dye—a particular shade of blue, which was unobtainable elsewhere.

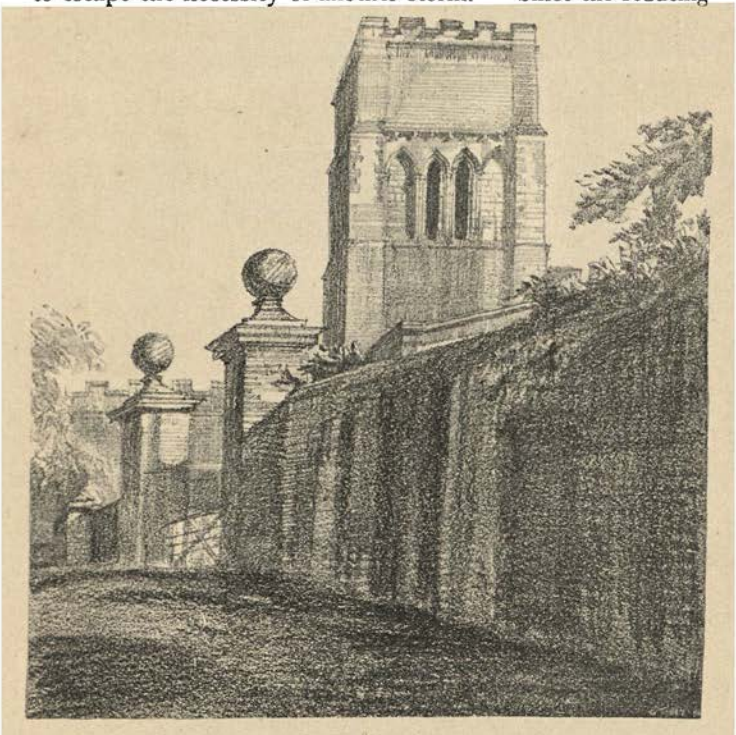
Mr. Festing Jones, one of Butler's most intimate friends, who has already published a short memoir and is engaged upon a full biography, recalls how Butler used to say, when he first knew him, that he would like to be buried at Langar and have engraved upon his tombstone the subject of the last of Handel's six great fugues. In the novel, Ernest Pontifex sends to his godfather the same suggestion, viz., that the subject of this fugue should be placed on the tombstone of the one aunt who had been kind to him, and the boy adds: "It would do better for a man, especially an old man who was very sorry for things, than for a woman; if you do not like it for Aunt Alethea, I shall keep it for myself." Nothing could better show the intensely autobiographical nature of the novel. But was Butler a man who was "very sorry for things"? Hardly, or his writings would surely have acquired a more mellow tone. Butler was not buried in Langar. He was cremated and his ashes were dispersed. There is no monument or tablet to his memory in Langar Church, and he wrote of religion in such an acrid tone that it is difficult to press for the erection of such a memorial. Nevertheless, Samuel Butler was easily the most distinguished son of Langar, since the great admiral, and it is the Church's mission to forget and forgive. Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who has expressed most generously his own indebtedness to Butler in the preface to one of his plays, has

written: "Really, the English do not deserve to have great men. They allowed Butler to die practically unknown." The reproach is true. Now, after death, his fame is spreading.

Langar Church is a splendid structure, cruciform in shape, with a fine spacious chancel and noble tower, a church evidently built for a far larger congregation than that which it at present serves. In the north transept lie some of the Chaworths from neighbouring Wiverton. Their memorials are all of the sixteenth century, the two latest being those of Sir John Chaworth (d. 1558) and Sir George Chaworth, his son, who died in 1589. The south transept is given up to the Scropes and the Howes. The most magnificent monument is that of Thomas, Lord Scrope, and Philadelphia, his wife. It is a rich and exquisite piece of work, in almost perfect preservation, and the white marble effigies gleam as brightly as when fresh from the sculptor's hand. This Lord Scrope died in 1609. Kneeling at his parents' feet is the effigy of Emanuel, the last of the Scropes, who was created Earl of Sunderland, and was Knight of the Garter, Lord Warden of the West Marches, Steward of Richmond and the holder of many other honorific sinecures. He left no legitimate heirs and the title died with him. The Howe monuments are disappointing, that of the great admiral being merely a memorial tablet on the chapel wall. One of the oddest and ugliest features of the church is the raised floor of the eastern bay of the south aisle. This was done in order to provide a vault for the Howes, without digging deeply down. Nothing could better show the extraordinary influence of the aristocracy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No one objects to their grandiose memorials, for these are often of the deepest interest to posterity. But that their very vaults should be obtruded upon the public gaze to the detriment of the whole church, a century after their connection with the place has ceased, seems not a little remarkable.

Two miles north of Langar, through a bare, uninteresting stretch of country, is Wiverton Hall, which occupies a small niche of its own in the history of the shire. This was the home of the Chaworths whose monuments are in Langar Church, and in their possession and that of the Musters—the two families have become fused—it still remains. Our general account of that family may conveniently be postponed till we reach Annesley, but their house at Wiverton is of interest

because it was fortified during the Civil War and did not surrender until November, 1645. General Poyntz moved against it a day or two after the storm of Shelford, and his letter to Speaker Lenthall shows that he was as glad as the garrison to escape the necessity of another storm. "Since the reducing



Langar Church.

of Shelford," wrote Poyntz, "it pleased God to assist us in the gaining of Wiverton House, the strength whereof moved me to give them fair quarter to march away with bag and baggage." Queen Henrietta Maria broke her journey from Newark at Wiverton when moving towards Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and Rupert and his brother Maurice were there for a night

after their quarrel with the king at Newark. The main function of Wiverton, indeed, seems to have been that of helping to maintain touch between Newark and Belvoir on the one side and Ashby on the other. The garrison was a very small one, but the defences of the place were evidently well planned, and a line of earthworks had been thrown up from the Hall down to the brook in order to secure the water supply. The old gateway still remains in good preservation, an interesting survival of the period when the architect was still under the domination of the idea that a great house must needs be something of a castle, and so still continued to plan gateways which suggested moat, drawbridge and portcullis. Doubtless that is why Wiverton Hall used erroneously to be described as a castle, though it never was more than an ancient manor-house. The gateway has a fine arch and rounded turrets, and is much more picturesque than the Hall itself. One of the bedrooms has the reputation of being haunted, but the ghost is nothing more formidable than the rumble of a wheeled carriage passing through the archway on an errand unknown.

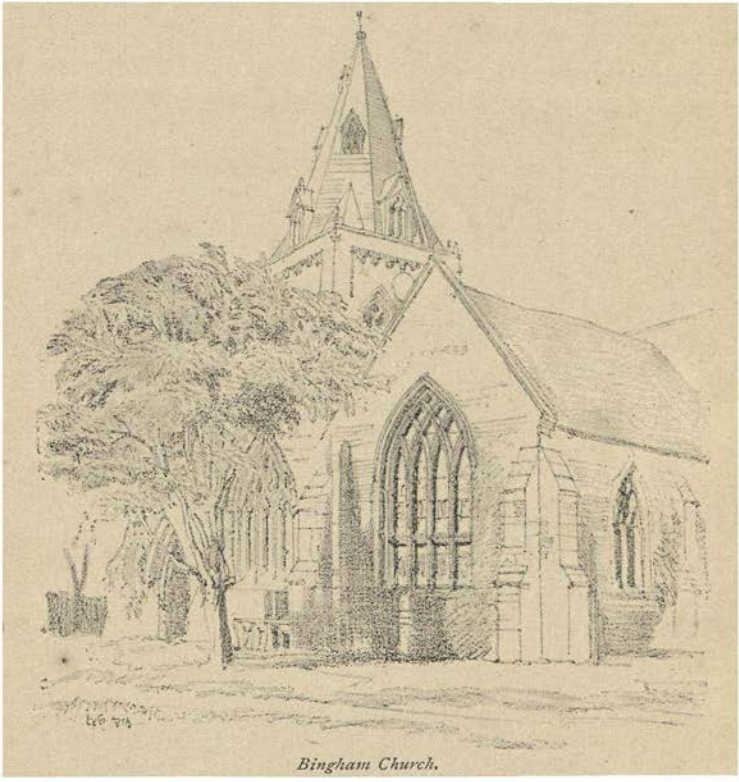
CHAPTER VIII

BINGHAM; MARGIDUNUM; SHELFORD AND THE STANHOPES

BINGHAM, which gives its name to one of the Hundreds of the county, has seen, if not better, at any rate more spacious, days. Like so many of the villages in this district south of the Trent, it has shrunk in size—it had a thousand inhabitants a century ago—and most of those who pass through it on the high road from Nottingham to Grantham never suspect the existence of the large market place which once was a centre of bustling activity. The church, collegiate in former times, is celebrated for its broached spire, one of the finest in the county, but the rest of the fabric is of little interest. In the chancel is a cross-legged effigy of a knight, supposed to be one Richard de Bingham, and the chancel itself has been newly paved with black and white marble. The only monument of interest is the stone, now in the tower, to the memory of a local mathematician, Mr. Robert White, author of an annual astronomical work called "The Celestial Atlas or New Ephemeris." He died in 1773. The panels of the pulpit are curiously painted with angels of a very "young-ladyish" type, and in one of the medallions of the chancel screen is a portrait of the once celebrated beauty, Mrs. Langtry. The explanation is that "The Jersey Lily" used to visit at the Rectory in the "Eighties" of last century, and the artist, Frank Miles, whose pencil sketches of female heads enjoyed great popularity for a time, was a son of the Rector. Hence the angels of the pulpit and the medallions of the screen.

Some day, no doubt, Bingham Church will contain a worthy memorial of the most distinguished man to whom the little town has given birth. This was Robert Lowe, 1st Viscount Sherbrooke, who was born at the Rectory in 1811. He was the second son of the Rector, who, like his famous son, was an

albino. Tradition says that he had a club foot, while his parish clerk had one leg shorter than the other, and was as swarthy as an Indian. So parson and clerk must have made the oddest pair. The Rector was an enthusiastic follower of hounds, and



Bingham Church.

enjoys a verse all to himself in Philip Pierrepont's hunting song :—

> Next little Bob Lowe, on his little brown mare,
> Comes nicking across with all possible care,
> On her he rides steady, but when he rides Stella
> No man in the hunt can be his playfellow.

But the Rev. Robert Lowe was much more than a mere hunting parson. He was one of the originators of the Poor Law system of 1834, and "the well-disciplined workhouse at Bingham," like that at Southwell in which he was also interested, served as a model to the poor law reformers of his day. He believed in sternness and Draconian discipline, and Lowe and his "beggar-catcher" were known far and wide. And yet he was very popular, and his memory, though he died in 1845, is still cherished by a slender band of very ancient inhabitants. It is said of him that he once undertook to shoot and eat a partridge every day for a month, save Sundays, and that he won his bet.

Young Robert Lowe was one of a numerous family, and he says in his Autobiography, referring back to his early days at Bingham: "Our life was a very secluded one. Our nearest, and indeed almost our only neighbour, was the family of Mr. Musters, the husband of Byron's Mary," who lived at Wiverton. Lowe went to school at Southwell for two years, before going to Winchester, and he frequently visited the district in after years, when he was a prominent figure in the political world. For his elder brother succeeded to the Oxton estates on the death of his kinsman, William Sherbrooke, in 1847, and took the name of Sherbrooke, which Robert chose for his own Viscountcy. Some day, therefore, Bingham Church will doubtless have a worthy memorial of the brilliant Chancellor of the Exchequer—despite his luckless association with the abortive match tax—and the orator whose speeches against the extension of the franchise in 1866 and 1867 contained some of the finest rhetoric heard in the House of Commons during the Mid-Victorian era.

Among earlier Rectors of Bingham—the living was one of the best in the county—were three in succession who were all made Bishops: Abbott, the predecessor of Laud at Canterbury, Hanmer, and Wren, the father of the great Sir Christopher. Connected with the Wrens by marriage was Dr. Brunsell, Rector of Bingham during the Commonwealth, who was one of the last parsons to lay a restless ghost. It was quite a simple process, apparently. A grave was dug; an empty coffin was procured; the Parson in full canonicals walked at the head of his parishioners to the churchyard, read the Burial Service, and the ghost walked no more.

The Rectory, where the Lowes lived, was considerably altered by the next Rector, Canon Miles, but the garden remains much

the same, and the mulberry tree, which Lord Sherbrooke spoke of with affection to the end of his days, still flourishes, and the pond where he and his brothers sailed their boats. The eagle's cage, however, which in his day adorned the front lawn, has long since been improved away. Only a few years ago an old man who, as gardener's boy, had helped to plant most of the trees in the fine Rectory garden, died at the age of 94.

Bingham had a zeal for education in days when education was held in less honour than now. In 1784 and 1785 "several spirited young gentlemen of the town" performed two tragedies and four comedies on behalf of a fund for the endowment of a free-school, and played so well that each of Bingham's two elementary schools receives in perpetuity £4 10*s*. per annum from the charity. One of the original performers, Mr. John Strong, lived to nearly ninety years of age and continued to the end to combine the duties of schoolmaster and postmaster of Bingham.

A short cross-road from Bingham takes us down into the Fosse Way again, which here runs with remorseless directness all the way to Newark. If ever street deserved to be called straight, it is this. Moreover, it is wide and its surface is of an admirable smoothness, which invites to speed. But of outward interest it has none. An occasional branch road is the only break in the undeviating monotony. However, just beyond the turning on the left to Newton, the antiquary, who has been prepared beforehand, begins to keep his eyes open. Newton proclaims itself the "new town"; where, then, is the old one? The answer is that it is here at your feet. You are on the site of Margidunum when you reach an ancient ash tree on the right, with a gate at its side and a tumbledown shed beneath its branches. And Margidunum was a Roman settlement.

Even if the spade had not given ocular demonstration, the evidence of the place names on the map would have been sufficient. The name of Castle Hill is attached to part of the site on the left hand, though there is no hill and scarce even a gentle eminence. The meadows on the left are Burrow Fields, and the patch of wood lying back on the right of the Fosse Way is Burrowsmoor Holt. Burrow scarcely hides the word Borough, and so it was spelt by Stukeley in 1722. Then, again, there is an ancient track running diagonally through the fields in a north-westerly direction to the Trent which bears the name of

Bridgeford Street. This was the old way to the ferry at Gunthorpe along the ancient road to Oxton and Ollerton.

The Fosse Way cuts right through the old encampment in a north-easterly direction, but the outline of the camp can be fully traced except on the western side. In the south-west corner is a spring, now called Newton Spring, but referred to by old writers as the Old Wark Spring, whence the Car Dyke flows, and this spring no doubt determined the original selection of the site. The camp proper covers an area of about 7 acres, but excavation has proved that during the later

Cottages at Scarrington.

period of the settlement the dwellings extended outside the lines of the original enclosure. Stukeley wrote: "Hereabouts I saw Roman foundations of walls and floors of houses . . . stones set edgewise in clay and liquid mortar run upon them. There are also short oaken posts or piles at proper intervals, some whereof I pulled up with my own hands. Houses stood all along the Fosse whose foundations have been dug up and carried to the neighbouring villages. They told us, too, of a famous pavement near the Fosse Way. Close by, in a pasture called Castle Hill Close, has been a great building which, they say, was carried all to Newark."

Of recent years the excavation of this site has been taken in hand by a few Nottingham antiquaries, and their zeal has been well rewarded, though at the time of writing only a small fraction of the camp—near the ash tree—has been dug over. Large quantities of pottery have been found, a few coins from 265 A.D.

to 370 A.D., and some human bones, but no foundations of buildings and no inscriptions of any kind. It is expected, however, that better results will attend the excavation which is to be undertaken in the fields on the left. Dr. T. Davies Pryce, in an interesting paper written for the British Archaeological Association, claims that the work already done has satisfactorily established the fact that the occupation was of a military character, that the first settlement dates from early in the 1st century, and that the later civil site outgrew the original walls. He thinks it probable that Margidunum was founded in the Governorship of Ostorius Scapula (47-60 A.D.) and that its site was fixed by the 9th Legion on their forward march to Lincoln. At that period the line from the Severn to the Wash formed the limit of the Roman occupation of Britain, and the disasters which befell the scattered Roman garrisons at the time of the revolt of the Iceni, shew that their hold over the country was exceedingly precarious. It is hoped that some lucky find may throw clearer light on the early history of Margidunum, and that a complete ground plan of the buildings within the station will eventually be obtained. Some unfinished castings of bronze celts and a Neolithic stone axe suggest that the Romans adapted to their own purposes an earlier Celtic settlement.

From Margidunum we turn back to the by-road, leading through the hamlet of Newton to Shelford, crossing midway the ridge which bounds this side of the Trent Valley. Shelford lies below in a big bend of the river, and Shelford is of historical interest as the home of the Stanhopes. The living connection, it is true, has long since ceased. There has been no Stanhope House in Shelford since the Civil War. But for nearly two centuries more the Stanhopes used to bury their dead in the Stanhope chapel in the church. Their name ranks high in English history, for there are three earldoms in the family—Chesterfield, Stanhope, and Harrington—and Shelford was the common place of origin of all three.

The connection dates back to the Reformation, when a small Augustinian priory at Shelford, founded in the reign of Henry II., closed its obscure uneventful history in the general destruction of the religious houses. Henry VIII. granted it, together with Lenton Priory, to Sir Michael Stanhope, a knight with a chequered career, for the Lord Protector Somerset

married his half-sister, and he shared not merely in the rise of his relative but in the swift descent of his fall. His end was the block on Tower Hill in 1552, in the company of Sir Thomas Arundel. But the "treason" for which he suffered did not entail the loss of his estates, since his grandson, Philip, knighted in 1605, was able to pay the thrifty but impecunious James I. £10,000 for a barony in 1616. In 1628 Charles I. made him Earl of Chesterfield. Early in the Civil War he was captured at Lichfield, and after paying a fine of £8,698 to the Parliament took no further part in the campaigns. But his numerous sons were zealous in the Royalist cause. His fourth son, Colonel Ferdinando, was shot dead in a skirmish at East Bridgford in 1644, and his fifth son, Philip, was mortally wounded at the storming of Shelford House on October 27, 1645. He had put the family manor-house into a condition of defence, and right through the war—for it was not taken until the king's cause was irretrievably lost at Naseby—it remained a thorn in the side of the Parliamentary garrison at Nottingham.

The storming of Shelford House was the most sanguinary bit of fighting which occurred within the confines of the county, and the story is exciting enough to justify its description in detail. The best known account of it occurs in the Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson, but this narrative requires to be checked very carefully by other and more independent authorities.

At first the Shelford garrison played a mosquito part. They had a troop of about thirty horsemen who made plundering forays against the property of the gentry on the Parliament side, prevented the country people sending in supplies to Nottingham, and rendered the movements of any small Parliamentary detachments in the vale highly insecure. It was, moreover, the Shelford and Wiverton garrisons which seized, and for a brief time held the Trent bridge and built a small fort for its protection. Consequently, Nottingham had a long account to settle with Shelford, and when at last the local Parliamentarians had sufficient troops to push matters to a conclusion, it was determined to reduce Shelford and Wiverton once and for all before moving down the valley to the final investment of Newark. But first Colonel Hutchinson wrote to Colonel Stanhope offering favourable terms if he would surrender. The answer was "a

very scornful huffing reply," in which Stanhope threatened to lay Nottingham Castle as flat as a pancake.

So the forces moved out to invest Shelford, with Major-General Sydenham Poyntz in command and Colonels Hutchinson and Rossiter to help—a very formidable muster against a garrison only two hundred strong. Colonel Hutchinson's detachment seized Shelford village, where they came under a troublesome fire from a party of Royalist snipers who had taken up a position in the church steeple. "There was a trap door," says Mrs. Hutchinson, "that went into the belfry and they had made it fast and had drawn up the ladder and the bell ropes, and regarded not the Governor's threatening them to have no quarter if they came not down, so that he was forced to send for straw and smother them out." Among the prisoners thus taken was "a woman corporall," but much more important was the seizure of a boy who had been on the Parliament side but had been captured by the enemy and cheerfully accepted their proposal that he should change his colours. When Colonel Hutchinson threatened to hang him as a renegade, he offered to disclose the weakest part of the defences where the palisado was unfinished. The Colonel thought that the story was not unlikely to be true, and so it proved. Meanwhile, General Poyntz had sent in a summons to surrender, to which the following spirited reply was received:—

"SIR,

"I keepe this garrison for the King, and in defence of it I will live and die, and your number is not so great, nor you so much master of the field, but that I am confident soon to lessen your number and see you abroad; and for relief, we need none. Therefore I desire you to be satisfied with this answer from

"Your Servant,
"PHIL. STANHOPE."

Thereupon, the order was given to storm. But the defences had been well planned. The place was on level ground, "encompassed with a very strong bulwark and a great ditch without, in most places wet at the bottom, so that they within were very confident, there being no cannon brought against them, to hold it out." The attack was delivered simultaneously from two sides,

by a "regiment of Londoners" and by Hutchinson's troops, and the storming parties, after filling up the ditches with faggots, planted ladders against the bulwarks. But the ladders, as is usual in storming operations, were found too short and the defenders hurled down logs of wood which swept off a whole ladder full of men at once. Then the narrative proceeds thus :—

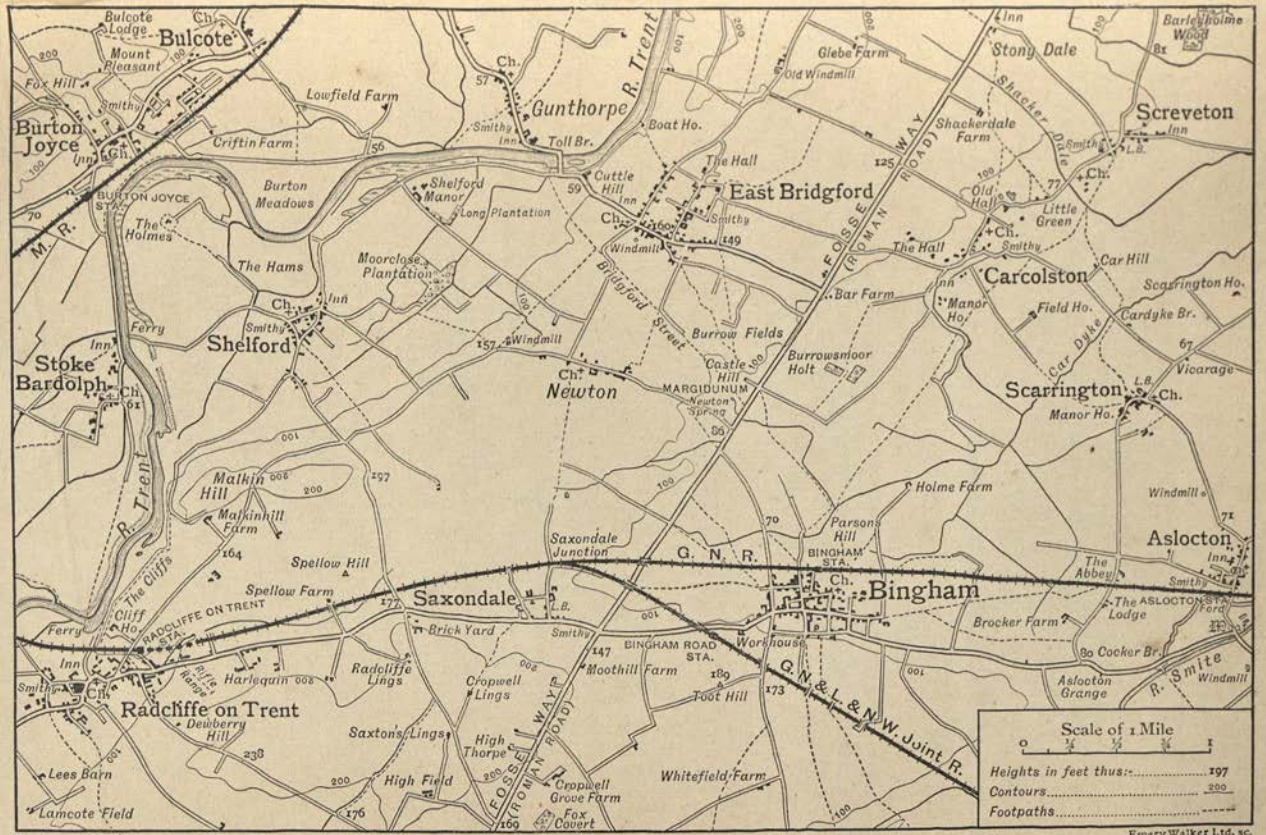
"The governor had ordered other musketeers to beat off those men that stood upon the top of the works, which they failed to do by shooting without good aim; but the governor directed them better, and the Nottingham horse dismounting, and assailing with their pistols, and headpieces, helped the foot to beat them all down from the top of the works, except one stout man, who stood alone, and did wonders in beating down the assailants, which the governor being angry at, fetched two of his own musketeers and made them shoot, and he immediately fell, to the great discouragement of his fellows. Then the governor himself first entered, and the rest of his men came in as fast as they could. But while this regiment was entering on this side, the Londoners were beaten off on the other side, and the main force of the garrison turned upon him. The cavaliers had half moons within, which were as good a defence to them as their first works; into these the soldiers that were of the queen's regiment were gotten, and they in the house shot from out of all the windows. The governor's men, as soon as they got in, took the stables and all their horses, but the governor himself was fighting with the captain of the papists and some others, who, by advantage of the half moon and the house, might have prevailed to cut him off and those that were with him, which were not many.

"The enemy being strengthened by the addition of those who had beaten off the assailants on the other side, were now trying their utmost to vanquish those that were within. The lieutenant-colonel, seeing his brother in hazard, made haste to open the draw-bridge, that Poyntz might come in with his horse; which he did, but not before the governor had killed that gentleman who was fighting with him, at whose fall his men gave way. Poyntz, seeing them shoot from the house, and apprehending the king might come to their relief, when he came in, ordered that no quarter should be given. And here the governor was in greater danger than before, for the strangers hearing him called governor,

were advancing to have killed him, but that the lieutenant-colonel, who was very watchful to preserve him all that day, came in to his rescue, and scarcely could persuade them that it was the governor of Nottingham; because he, at the beginning of the storm, had put off a very good suit of armour that he had, which being musket-proof, was so heavy that it heated him, and so would not be persuaded by his friends to wear anything but his buff coat. The governor's men, eager to complete their victory, were forcing their entrance into the house; meanwhile Rossiter's men came and took away all their horses, which they had taken away when they first entered the works and won the stables, and left in the guard of two or three, while they were pursuing their work.

"The governor of Shelford, after all his bravadoes, came but meanly off; it is said he sat in his chamber, wrapt up in his cloak, and came not forth that day; but that availed him not, for how, or by whom, it is not known, but he was wounded and stripped, and flung upon a dunghill. The lieutenant-colonel, after the house was mastered, seeing the disorder by which our men were ready to murder one another, upon the command Poyntz had issued to give no quarter, desired Poyntz to cause the slaughter to cease, which was presently obeyed, and about sevenscore prisoners were saved. While he was thus busied, inquiring what was become of the governor, he was shown him naked upon the dunghill; whereupon the lieutenant-colonel called for his own cloak and cast it over him, and sent him to a bed in his own quarters, and procured him a surgeon. Upon his desire he had a little priest, who had been his father's chaplain, and was one of the committee faction; but the man was such a pitiful comforter, that the governor, who was come to visit him, was forced to undertake that office; but though he had all the supplies they could every way give him, he died the next day.

"The house which belonged to his father, the Earl of Chesterfield, was that night burned, none certainly knowing by what means, whether by accident or on purpose; but there was most ground to believe that the country people, who had been sorely infested by that garrison, to prevent the keeping it by those who had taken it, purposely set it on fire. If the queen's regiment had mounted their horses and stood ready upon them when our men entered, they had undoubtedly cut them all off; but they standing to the works, it pleased God to lead them into



Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

that path he had ordained for their destruction, who being papists, would not receive quarter, nor were they much offered it, being killed in the heat of the contest, so that not a man of them escaped."

Such is Mrs. Hutchinson's story. Let us now turn to other contemporary accounts. General Poyntz, in his official despatch, said: "The enemy refused summons, and many of them were put to the sword in entering the house. The Earl of Chesterfield's son was Governor, and is sore wounded. The King seemed to offer to relieve it, but did it not. There were 200 in the house; most of them were killed or wounded." We may also quote a letter from Colonel Richard Sandys, written on the same night as the storm. He says: "We assaulted Shelford House this day about 4 of the clock. It was defended gallantly and disputed half an hour at sword's point after we got to the top of the works, but our men growing faint I dismounted and being assisted by some troopers that dismounted with me, stormed and was one of the first that entered in. We killed about 140 and gave quarter to about 30. The Governor (son to the Earl of Chesterfield) received many wounds, and I believe some mortal, but I, coming in, gave him a longer time to repent, for he is not likely to live." Sandys' figures are further confirmed by a certain John Hughes, who was also an eye-witness. Writing from Bingham on November 3, he says that the stormers were "gallantly entertained by the enemy, but within half an hour we beat them out of their works and the sword soon gave them their reward, for of 200 there is not above 40 got quarter. The young governor, son to the Lord Stanhope, was stript for dead, but some pitiful officer perceiving life in him got him away, and it may happily be a means to recover body and soul, for what he utters is full of repentance. Most of them were the Queen's Regiment." Obviously, the "pitiful officer" there referred to was Colonel Sandys.

It is quite evident from this evidence that instead of seven score of the garrison being saved, as Mrs. Hutchinson says, it was seven score who were killed. Why, then, this savage butchery? The answer beyond doubt is to be found in the fact that most of the garrison belonged to the Queen's Regiment, and that they were all Catholics. There was no mercy for the Papist in the Civil War, whoever else might hope for quarter. Nothing in all the King's long list of offences moved the Par-

liamentarians to greater fury than the evidence that he was scheming to bring an army of Roman Catholic Irishmen over to England to fight for him. That was regarded with as much horror as would have been the employment of savages. And yet neither party hesitated to import soldiers of fortune from the Continent!

These subsidiary accounts which we have quoted go far to redeem the Governor of Shelford from the particularly cruel aspersions which Mrs. Hutchinson cast upon him. There is nothing in any narrative but hers to suggest that Philip Stanhope skulked in the house all day, wrapped in his cloak, without leaving his chamber. If he was thrown naked on a dunghill, covered with wounds, that is surely evidence rather of the brutal ferocity of the storming party than of the cowardice of their victim. And, as a matter of fact, on most occasions when the Parliamentarians stormed a fortified place, as was notably the case on a large scale at Basing House and on a smaller scale at Woodcroft House, they distinguished themselves by the vindictiveness of their reprisals.

But why was no attempt at relief made from Newark to save the doomed garrison at Shelford, when the peril in which the latter stood was perfectly well known? A relieving force actually started, but in Colonel Sandys' phrase it soon "faced about and very peaceably returned," scarcely having made a demonstration. No doubt the reason was that the Newark garrison—as we shall see later—was distracted by the quarrels between Willis and Bellasis and embarrassed by the presence of the king, who only slipped away just in time, for Sandys believed that he could not possibly escape. Add to this that the Trent Valley was full of the enemy and that any relief force was pretty sure of finding its return effectively barred. Shelford, in fact, had been doomed all the time to fall to the first resolute storm as soon as the Parliament forces had established their ascendancy. Part of the old manor-house, it may be added, survived the storm and the fire, and was rebuilt and refronted in 1676.

Shelford Church is full of Stanhope memorials. The most interesting is that of Sir Michael and Lady Ann, his wife, who were the original grantees of Shelford Priory at the hands of Henry VIII. Sir Michael was a younger son of Sir Edward Stanhope of Rampton, beyond Newark, and was Governor of

Hull, before he became entangled in the schemes of the Duke of Somerset and lost his head on Tower Hill in 1552. His widow, Lady Ann, survived him thirty-five years, during which, as her epitaph declares, she brought up all her younger children in virtue and learning. "She kept continually a worshipful house, relieved the poor daily, gave good countenance and comfort to the Preachers of God's Word, and spent most of her latter days in prayer and using the church where God's Word was preached." Manifestly, a noble and God-fearing Dame!

Near by is Chantrey's exquisite marble monument to Lady Georgiana West, daughter of the Earl of Chesterfield, who died in 1824 at the age of twenty-two. Another memorial contains the following pleasing lines to the memory of Mrs. Ellis, who died in 1761, wife of the Right Honourable Welbore Ellis, who later became Lord Mendip.

> With wit well natured, learned yet not vain,
> Devout yet cheerful, and resigned in pain,
> With polished manner and a taste refined
> With female softness and a manly mind:
> Such my Eliza was, and shall no verse
> Record these virtues or adorn her hearse?
> Forbid it Justice, Gratitude and Shame,
> He who best knows attests it with his name.

These lines are so creditable to their author that it is difficult to believe that the author was Welbore Ellis, a member of the Cabinet of Lord North which did such incalculable harm to Great Britain. A man of absolutely no ability save that of plundering the Treasury—he was said to draw £20,000 a year as Treasurer of the Navy—he had remained in office for year after year, the fastest sticking limpet of the whole Administration, vain, pompous, self-important, and a favourite butt both of friend and foe. In the House of Commons he faithfully lived up to his Christian name, and bored successive generations of members from Pelham to Pitt. His wife was a Stanhope, daughter of the Sir William Stanhope who had bought Pope's villa at Twickenham, and there the Ellises lived and altered—of course, for the worse—the poet's celebrated riverside garden.

The famous fourth Earl of Chesterfield, wit, man of letters, and patron of the arts, who died in 1773, finds mention upon one of the mural tablets. He gave his bones to Shelford at second hand, so to speak, for he was first buried in South Audley Street Chapel in London. It is a pity that there is no bust of

him, if Lord Harvey's description of him be true as "having a person as disagreeable as it was possible for a human being to be without being deformed, and a broad, rough-featured, ugly face with black teeth and a head big enough for a Polyphemus." But if Lord Chesterfield had no beauty he at least had wit, and his manners were beyond reproach, even though it was said that they were those of a dancing-master. "Give Dayrolles a chair!" was his famous remark, half an hour before his death, as the doctor entered the bed-chamber. Polite he doubtless was to the end, but he had no heart, and his once famous "Letters to his Son" are much more praised than read. His most interesting achievement, perhaps, was his marriage to Petronilla Melusina von der Schulenburg, daughter of George I. and his German mistress, who had been created Duchess of Kendal. Her father left her £40,000 in his will, and consideration of that £40,000 had not a little to do with the noble earl's choice of her for his wife. But when George I. died his son George II. tore up the will and refused to pay—an act quite worthy of that illustrious monarch. However, the Earl of Chesterfield was not one to be bluffed out of his wife's dowry in that way. He promptly sued the Crown for £40,000 and rather than face the scandal the king offered to settle for £20,000. With that the earl and countess were content, and they continued to live side by side in their respective establishments, next door to one another, she in her house and he in his.

In connection with Shelford Church and the Stanhope vault a most amusing story is told. A century or so ago it was remarked that the local tailor in the village seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of rich crimson velvet, out of which he made waistcoats for his customers at a very low price. People could not understand where he obtained his supply. Then it dawned upon some one that the tailor was also the sexton of the church and had access to the vaults, where the coffins of the Stanhopes lay with all the appropriate trappings of eighteenth century magnificence. That was the source of the tailor's supply. He had been cutting up the velvet from the coffins of the dead Chesterfields for waistcoats! The vicar was horrified, and wrote a letter of shocked apology to the reigning earl who, to his infinite credit, saw the humour of the thing and refused to take a tragic view of the sexton's crime.

The Trent at East Bridgford.

CHAPTER IX

EAST BRIDGFORD; CAR COLSTON; SCREVETON; FLINTHAM; SYERSTON; ELSTON; EAST STOKE

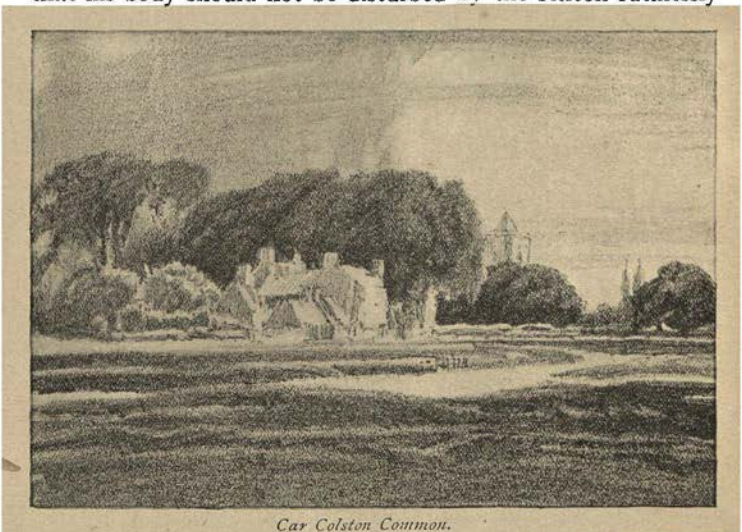
LEAVING Shelford, we take the road down the Trent side towards East Bridgford. Near the latter place the river is spanned by Gunthorpe bridge—the village is on the opposite bank—and Gunthorpe Bridge is the only one between Nottingham and Newark, and even there toll is charged. This reach of the Trent is very attractive and right down to East Stoke the walk by the riverside and along the Trent Hills is one of considerable beauty. East Bridgford is a large scattered village with a good Hall and ancient church, and best known in local history as the home of the Hackers. This was a strong Royalist family, though one brother—and he the most famous—was a Regicide. Thomas was slain in a skirmish near Wiverton, where his brother was present on the other side; Roland lost an arm for the King at Newark; while the Roundhead, Colonel Francis Hacker, took, as we have seen, a prominent part in running Monckton to earth at Willoughby Field. Unhappily for himself, he went to London and to him was assigned the duty of conducting Charles to the scaffold at Whitehall, and being the officer in command at the execution. The death warrant was addressed to him personally by the Court, and that fact sealed his doom. At the Restoration he was specially exempted

from the general pardon, and was brought to trial and condemned to die. He pleaded, of course, that he had acted under the orders of his superiors. "Truly, my lord," he said with firm dignity, "I have no more to say for myself but that I was a soldier and under command, and what I did was by the commission you have read. My desire hath ever been for the welfare of my country, and that the civil power might be upheld." The plea did not avail. He was hanged on October 19, 1660; his estate at Colston Bassett was confiscated, and had to be ransomed by his Royalist brother, Roland, from the Duke of York, to whom the King had granted it. Hacker died at Tyburn, according to a contemporary account, "without remorse," while his companion, Colonel Axtell, "dissolved himself into tears for the King and his own soul." Colonel Hacker's wife made a despairing effort to save her husband. She carried the original of the fatal warrant to London that it might plead with his judges, but all in vain.

From East Bridgford let us get back to the Fosse Way again. We enter it by the old toll-gate, but a quarter of a mile beyond, on the way to Newark, quit it by a lane which turns off on the right to reach a group of pretty villages, lying well back from the highway. The first of these is Car Colston, the chief feature of which is a spacious green—the best and biggest village green in the county, irregular in shape, fringed by a few cottages and a little inn, just the sort of green which knows no change from one generation to another of the tribes of geese which make it their resonant home. The old Manor House lies to the right along a grassy lane which wanders away aimlessly into the fields, and the church is at the further end of the green beyond the village, on the road to Screveton. The pride of Car Colston is that it was the home of Robert Thoroton, the famous antiquary and honoured historian of his county. Thoroton was a squire who had read medicine as a young man in London, and came back to his native acres to practise it. But his real enthusiasm was for antiquities, genealogies and heraldry, for old tombs and ancient churches, and especially for family histories. His book on Nottinghamshire is an astounding storehouse of local information, representing almost incredible labour and patience. "I allow no man for a judge," he very sensibly wrote, "who hath not done something of this nature himself." Thoroton rebuilt a house called Moryn Hall and occupied it, so far as is known,

all through the tumult of the Civil War, without allowing the strife to distract his attention from his studies. His book, published in 1677, at once took rank among the great county histories.

Thoroton died in 1678, but he made ready for his demise some years before by preparing a large stone coffin, in which he desired to be buried. On this he placed the following inscription: "*Hoc posuit Rob. Thoroton aetatis suae* 49, *ut post mortem corpus ejus intemeratum quiesceret.*" In other words, he was anxious that his body should not be disturbed by the sexton ruthlessly



Car Colston Common.

digging over his bones—as village sextons frequently did—within a few years of his death. So he was buried in this stone coffin outside the church door on the south side, and a headstone was set up to mark the place. Then, in course of time, the headstone fell, the site of the grave was forgotten, and it was only rediscovered in 1845 when some work was being carried out in the churchyard. A few years later, in 1863, when further work was in progress, the stone coffin itself was dug up, a little crowd of villagers, including the school children, taking a hand in pulling it out with chains, and the skull was taken for a time into a neigh-

bouring house before being re-interred with the rest of the bones. Such is the scant respect that is paid to the pious wishes of an earlier century. Thoroton's stone coffin did not save him from the fate which he feared, and the coffin is now on show inside the church where he worshipped. Still later the missing head-stone was found, and it was then discovered that it was part of the ancient altar stone which had been cast out of the chancel at the Reformation by order of Parliament.

Apart from the interest attaching to Thoroton and his stone coffin, Car Colston church is well worth visiting for its own sake. It has a beautiful and spacious chancel belonging to the third quarter of the 14th century, with good stone sedilia, and singularly graceful communion rails, the slender balustrades being alternately two twisted and one plain. The gate-like entrance in the rails is semi-circular in form.

A little beyond Car Colston church on the right hand may be seen the stuccoed fragment of an old hall, now a farmhouse. This is said by some to have been the Moryn Hall, where Thoroton lived. But there were many good houses in this neighbourhood which now have vanished. One was Brunsell Hall, built in Caroline days, by Dr. Brunsell, who was Rector of Bingham and Screveton during the Commonwealth, and there was another and larger Hall in an adjoining field, still called the Manor. At Screveton, the parish we next enter, was Kirketon Hall, the last portion of which was demolished in 1823. This stood on the site of the present Rectory and was the home of the Whalleys, who were connected with the Hackers by marriage, and were a family of considerable distinction. One of them had been physician to Henry VII.; another, whose splendid monument is the chief feature of Screveton church, was the Richard Whalley who obtained an evil notoriety in the reign of Henry VIII. as one of the commissioners of Richard Cromwell. He visited the lesser monasteries in 1536 and found so successfully what his patron had instructed him to find that in 1538 his services were rewarded with the grant of Welbeck Abbey, and in 1546 with the manor of Sibthorpe. He was also Crown Receiver for Yorkshire, and might have amassed great opulence, had he not become involved in the Duke of Somerset's intrigues during the reign of Edward VI. For this he was fined heavily, and had to part with Welbeck to raise the money. But Mary's reign saw him once more in

favour, and Elizabeth endowed him with the manors of Whatton and Hawksworth, both quite close to his own estates.

His tomb is of great interest, though it has been moved from its original place in the chancel and is now in the vestry under the tower. Whalley lies at full length in alabaster, with his feet resting on a "whale"—which looks more like a colossal perch—while his three wives and twenty-five children are figured on the panels above. Embossed in gold letters on the tomb are the following quaint verses, written by his widow:—

Behold his wives were number three,
Two of them died in right good fame,
The third this Tomb erected she
For him who well deserved the same.
Both for his life and Godly end
Which all that knows must needs commend,
And they that knows not, yet may see
A worthy Whallaye loe was he.

Since time brings all things to an end
Let us ourselves applye
And learn by this our faithful friend
That here in Tomb doth lye
To fear the Lord and eke behold
The fairest is but dust and mold,
For as we are, so once was he,
And as he ys, so must we be.

One of Thomas Whalley's descendants was Richard Whalley, who married *en secondes noces* Frances, the daughter of Sir Henry Cromwell and aunt of Oliver Cromwell. This "Aunt Fanny's" second son, Edward Whalley, was yet another of the Regicides. He was present at Gainsborough fight, and also at Marston Moor. At Naseby the charge of his dragoons against the Royalist horse helped to decide the fate of the battle, and brought him promotion to a colonelcy. Two years later, Parliament voted him its thanks and the manor of Flawborough, adjoining the old family estate of Hawksworth. Whalley was in charge of the King during his confinement at Hampton Court, and his name appears in the death warrant next to that of his cousin, Oliver Cromwell. It was he, too, who carried away the Bauble on the famous occasion when Oliver cleared out the remnant of the Long Parliament; and the Protector did not neglect his kinsman's interests, for he made him Major-General

over the Counties of Nottingham, Lincoln, Derby, Leicester and Warwick, and raised him to the Peerage in his abortive House of Lords. When Monk brought back Charles II. from Breda, Whalley did not wait to take his chance of pardon. He fled in haste overseas to America, and the reward of £100 that was set on his head proved his judgment sound. He landed at Boston, but even there his position was precarious when his identity became known, and he fled before the warrant that was issued for his apprehension. His subsequent career is doubtful. A romantic story associates his name with a surprise attack by a party of Indians upon a place called Hadley, and the sudden appearance of an elderly man brandishing a long sword, whose martial bearing put new courage into the hearts of the colonists, who had been surprised while in church. The legend is that the mysterious stranger was Edward Whalley, who had been in hiding at the time in the pastor's house. Anyway, the Regicide's bones rest somewhere far from the quiet place of his birth.

It has been surmised by some that Henry Garnet, the famous Jesuit who was appointed, in 1587, superior of the English Province, and taking his life in his hand, came to England to forward his missionary and political propaganda, was a member of this family of Whalley. He was an associate of Catesby, of Gunpowder Plot notoriety, and after a career of thrilling adventure, was eventually captured at Hindlip Hall, near Worcester, with another priest, Father Oldcome. Their captors knew they were in the building, but could not discover their hiding place. So they sat down and waited, and eventually the two priests, finding the confinement intolerable—the place was so narrow that they could hardly move, and had to be fed through straws—came forth and delivered themselves up, though they knew the penalty was to be hanged, drawn and quartered. The evidence as to Garnet being a Whalley is not conclusive; but there seems little doubt that he came from this part of the county, and was educated at the Nottingham Free School before going to Winchester.

In addition to the Whalley tomb in Screveton church, notice should be taken of a very beautiful Norman font with interlaced arcading and of a superb carving of the Royal arms in oak of the date of Charles II., 1684. Perhaps the Whalleys—who, like the Hackers, were all Royalists save for the single "black sheep" in each flock—put up the royal arms with

special splendour in order to emphasise their detestation of their regicide connection.

A long mile beyond Screveton brings us to Flintham Park, where a modern house stands on the site of an ancient hall. This, in the time of Elizabeth, was still the residence of the Hose family, one of whose members in chain mail reposes in effigy in the church. Since their day the estate has passed through many different hands. It was a bygone owner of Flintham Hall who planted the cliff on the south bank of the Trent—here distant little more than a mile—with the trees which were once a great source of admiration to travellers between Newark and Nottingham. Bishop Corbet, for example, who passed that way about 1620, was moved to verse by Flintham Wood, and as appreciative descriptions of scenery are rare at that period the lines are worth quoting :—

> We are for Newarke after this sad talke
> And whither 'tis noe journey but a walke,
> Nature is wanton there, and the high way
> Seemed to be private though it open lay,
> As if some swelling lawyer for his health
> Or frantic usurer to tame his wealth
> Had chosen out ten miles by Trent, to try
> Two great effects of art and industry.
> The ground we trod was meddow, fertile land
> New trimmed and levelled by the mower's hand,
> Above it grew a roke, rude, steepe and high,
> Which claims a kind of reverence from the eye :
> Betwixt them both there glides a lovely stream,
> Not loud, but swifte : Maeander was a theme
> Crooked and rough : but had the poetts seen
> Straight, even Trent, it had immortall bin.
> This side the open plain admits the sun
> To half the river ; there did silver run ;
> The other half ran clouds ; where the curled wood
> With his exalted head threatened the flood.
> Here could I wish us ever passing by
> And never past ; now Newark is too nigh :
> And as a Christmas seems a day but short
> Deluding time with revels and good sport
> So did these beauteous mixtures us beguile,
> And the whole twelve, being travelled, seemed a mile.

The bishop does not specify more closely the route which he followed, but he seems to have kept to the paths through the fields on the north bank of the river, from Hoveringham to Fiskerton. That would be a very unusual route to select

nowadays, but Corbet writes as though it were in his day the usual track.

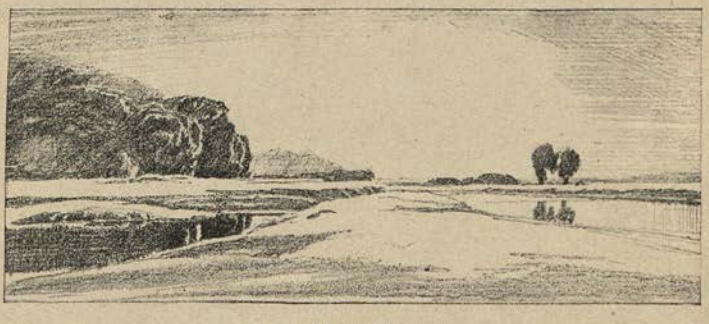
Here at Flintham the lane, which we have been following, runs out into the Fosse Way, along the border of Flintham Park, but a by-road will take you from the village direct to the little hamlet of Syerston. Syerston enjoyed its crowded hour of life one day during the Civil War, when some two or three hundred Royalist horse were quartered there and in the adjoining village of Elston. Colonel Hutchinson, hearing of

The Fosse Way at Syerston.

their presence, surprised them so successfully that "two captain-lieutenants, some cornets and other gentlemen of quality, thirty troopers and many more horse and arms were taken prisoners and Captain Thimbleby, "absolutely refusing quarter," was killed. Doubtless, he was in command and preferred to die rather than face the odium of having been caught napping. A lieutenant and a cornet of the attacking party who stayed too long in the village "for some drink"—as Mrs. Hutchinson puts it—were surprised by the Newarkers, who had received warning of what was afoot and sent out a strong rescuing party. But the Colonel got back safely to

Nottingham with his booty, and considering that his little band ran great risk of being intercepted either from Shelford or Wiverton it was a highly successful foray.

Elston is a mile from Syerston through the fields, and Elston is famous as the home of the Darwins. The little church, which has a curiously slender tower, is full of their memorials, and the long, low, grey hall, which looks as though every addition had been made lengthwise, is still in the family's possession. The Darwins came here from Lincolnshire towards the end of the seventeenth century, and Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles, was born here in 1731. After taking a medical degree at Cambridge, he settled in Nottingham in 1756, but



The Trent near Syerston.

finding that patients were slow in appreciating his merit, he moved on to Lichfield, after a two months' trial. Byron called him "a mighty master in unmeaning rhyme," and modern taste certainly endorses that scathing verdict. No one now reads his ponderous and endless verses on "The Loves of the Plants," and even Canning's witty parody, "The Loves of the Triangles," has followed its original to limbo. Darwin is chiefly remembered to-day because of the literary Lichfield circle, of which he was the centre, because of his clever anticipation of so modern an invention as the flying machine, and above all because he was the ancestor of a succession of brilliant scientists, one of whom first presented to the world in scientific shape the epoch-making theory of Evolution. Elston has a deserted chapel in the fields with a good twelfth century door-

way, but it is hardly worth the labour of discovery, and we pass up to the Fosse Way and soon reach the cross roads at East Stoke.

Here again we are on historic ground, for it is the site of one of the bloodiest battles that ever took place on English soil. This was the combat which ended the Wars of the Roses, and it was on these peaceful fields that the Yorkist cause fell in irretrievable ruin on June 16, 1487. The Yorkists were under the command of the Earl of Lincoln and Francis Viscount

East Stoke.

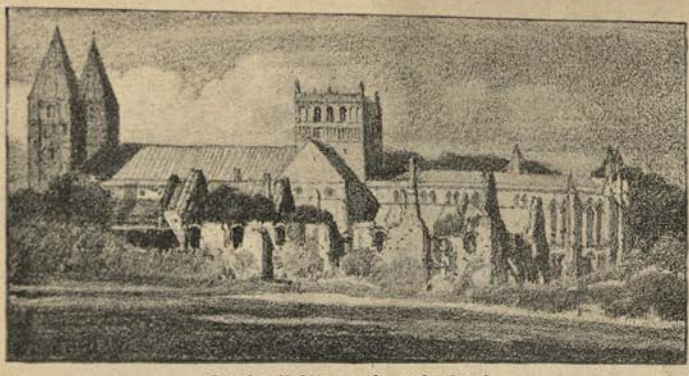
Lovel, and they had with them the Pretender, Lambert Simnel, masquerading as the son of Edward IV., and a large contingent of German mercenaries, under Martin Swartz, who had been hired by Edward IV.'s sister, widow of Charles the Bold. As they were marching to seize Newark, Henry VII. and the Lancastrian host moved out from Nottingham to give battle. Apparently the battle was arrayed across the Fosse Way near the cross roads, and it ended in the complete rout of the Yorkists. Part of their army was driven back in confusion on to the Trent, which at that time flowed in several channels instead of making its single great loop by Fiskerton Ferry, and the name of the Red Gutter still survives to recall, according

to local tradition, where the bodies of the trampled fugitives lay thickest. Deadman's Field is another significant place-name, so called from the number of bones which have been turned up from time to time. Near Stoke vicarage, between Stoke and Elston, is a perennial spring which never fails or freezes, and the legend is that this spring was promised by a wounded soldier to a merciful countryman who gave him water to drink. He would intercede for it in heaven, he said, and the prayer availed.

Stoke Park, which possesses the largest heronry in the county, has many interesting associations with the closely related families of Smith, Bromley and Pauncefote, since its purchase about 1750 by Mr. Abel Smith of Nottingham, one of three banker brothers. His eldest son, the first Baronet, Sir George Smith, married a granddaughter of Prince Rupert, who brought into the family several Stuart relics of the greatest interest and some fine Stuart portraits. His son, the second Baronet, took the name of Bromley by sign manual in 1778, while the 7th and present Baronet has assumed the name of Wilson by royal licence. From John Smith, brother of the first Baronet, are descended the Pauncefotes, of Preston Court, Gloucester, whose best known member, the popular British Ambassador to the United States, was raised to the peerage as Lord Pauncefote of Preston. He lived, after his retirement, at the Hall, and died in 1902. Abel Smith, another brother of the first Baronet, kept up the banking connection in London, as three of his sons did after him, and it was his second son, Robert, whom Pitt, in Disraeli's phrase, snatched from his counting-house in Lombard Street and created Lord Carrington in 1796. As one of the wits of the day remarked :—

> Bob Smith lives here ;
> Billy Pitt made him a Peer ;
> Took the pen from behind his ear.

The present Lord Carrington, now Marquis of Lincolnshire, is his grandson. The original "Smith's Bank" continues in Nottingham to this day.



Southwell Minster from the South.

CHAPTER X

SOUTHWELL AND ITS MINSTER

From East Stoke we cross the Trent at Fiskerton Ferry, and an hour's walk along the high road brings us to Southwell. Southwell is the daintiest town in the shire—a place where those who love the harvest of a quiet eye will be glad to linger. Yet it is strangely little known. Of late years, indeed, people outside the county have become vaguely aware of the existence of a Bishop of Southwell, but whether he is a real Bishop or "only a Suffragan," they have often but the haziest notions. That comes of living off the high road, as Southwell has done throughout her long history. She is not even on a main line of railway, but is served by the branch of a branch and so is twice removed from what is held by some to be the full tide of progress.

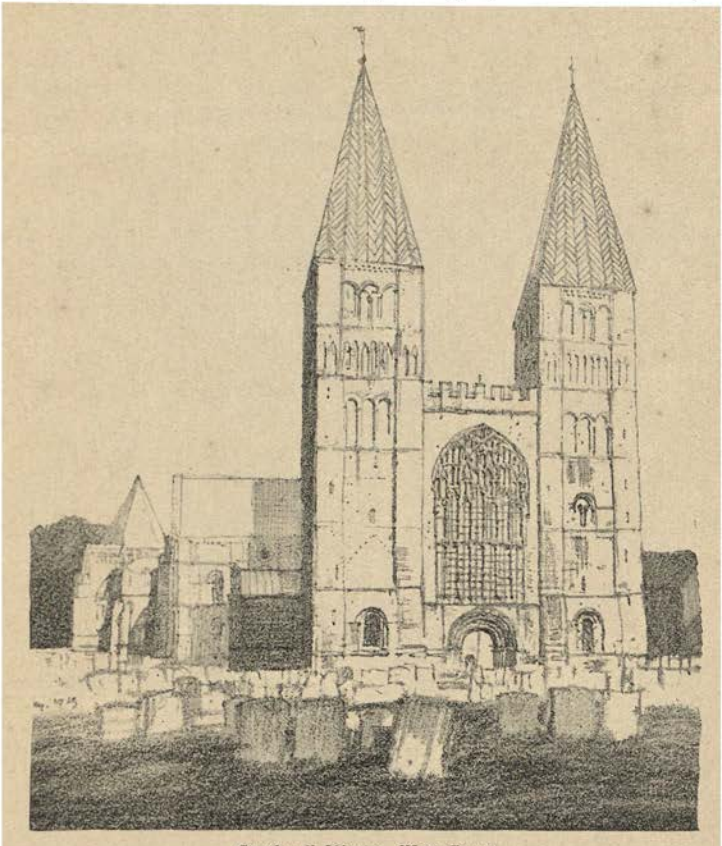
But though Southwell dwells retired and is a sleepy town, it has a character all its own. For one thing, it is ringed round with pleasant parks. The Archbishops of York, who for centuries had a country house here—not a palace, as it is usually called—required four parks in which to take their pleasure. There was the New Park, just at his Grace's door, still open ground for the most part and used as a common pasture after the Reformation till its sub-division in 1795. Then there was a second park at Hockerwood, a mile to the North-east, long since given over to cultivation, and Norwood Park to the west, which is a park to this day, and Hexgreave, four miles to the north-west, which

is the same. But these are only a few of the parks round Southwell, for are there not Kirklington and Winkburn and Kelham, and Brackenhurst, Oxton, Epperstone and Thurgarton all close to the minster town, and emphasising its rurality in the pleasantest possible way? Moreover, small though it be, Southwell straggles far and not untidily. Westthorpe spreads out thinly one way, with a charming little park of its own, and Eastthorpe another, and if you arrive at Southwell by train you have to pass through Burgage Green, which keeps its name as jealously as though there were a separate entity of Burgage. As, in fact, there is, for some of the houses which fringe the irregular green have, as we shall see, a romantic history, and even the mill on the right-hand side was once a House of Correction, where some shrewd magistrates experimented a century ago in the difficult art of prison-management.

The town itself is a paradise for the dawdler. The shops, of course, are naught, but there is an inn where history has been made, and an ugly Assembly Room next door to it, where Byron strutted on the boards in amateur theatricals and flirted desperately with a Southwell belle; and, as you explore the streets, you continually come across pleasing old houses with jolly gardens, not mansions by any means, but expressly designed for gentry of modest means in days when big fortunes were rare and life in a country town ran on simple and quiet lines. A person who stumbled in upon Southwell by accident without knowing what manner of place it was might well marvel at the number of comfortable houses, until he came within view of the Minster, and then he might perhaps smile to himself a little and understand. For what Cathedral city is not full of delightful and comfortable abodes? Southwell is rich in Prebendal houses, and the Prebendaries of the eighteenth century, who were their builders or rebuilders, made no pretence whatsoever to the ascetic temperament. And Southwell Minster still supplies most of their tenants.

But how came Southwell to possess such a Minster at all? For two reasons, apparently. First, because from Saxon times Southwell was a place of ecclesiastical importance as the shrine of St. Eadburh, generally identified with a noted Abbess of Repton. The other reason was that the enormous size of the diocese of York rendered it desirable that there should be a collegiate church in the south of the diocese, serving the same purposes

as Ripon in the West Riding and Beverley in the East. It was highly convenient to the Archbishop to have a college of secular clergy at his command for the general purposes of the diocese,



Southwell Minster. West Front.

and in the eleventh century the custom grew up for each member of such a collegiate church to have his own endowment or prebend in a separate parish, where he had a prebendal house, as well as

a residence in the town where the collegiate church was situated. So the fine Norman Minster was built in the middle of the twelfth century and Southwell became the mother church of Nottinghamshire, and the faithful came here for the Pentecostal processions instead of making toilsome and almost impossible journeys to York.

Southwell remained entirely under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of York until Pope Alexander III. issued a surprising decree declaring the chapter independent of all spiritual and temporal jurisdiction, whether of York or Canterbury on the one hand, and of the king on the other. The chapter of Southwell thus became a sort of sovereign ecclesiastical republic, acknowledging allegiance to none but the Pope, and the Pope, in return for this grant of autonomy, expected to have the privilege of appointing, when he chose, his own nominees to the vacant canonries. The Archbishop of York was thus ousted from all direct control over the affairs of Southwell, but he remained its visitor, and subsequent archbishops contrived to exercise in that capacity quite as much authority as they desired. The prejudice against Papal nominees grew very strong in England long before the days of Henry VIII., and the Southwell Chapter was perfectly well able to look after its own interests. The canons had the power to appoint their own "vicars," both to the prebendal cures and also for the performance of the daily offices in the Minster itself, and they allowed themselves a very generous latitude in the matter of residence. At the time of the Reformation the revenues amounted to £1,003 a year, and Henry VIII. had formed the plan of assigning one-third to the support of the bishop of the new see which he had intended to create at Southwell. But he never carried out the scheme. The money was wanted elsewhere and for other purposes. So the old chapter was formally re-established, and in 1548 the people of Southwell petitioned that the church might be used for a parish church and "our gramar scole stande with such stipende as apperteyneth the like, wherein our pore youth may be instructed."

Chief among the manuscripts preserved in the Minster library—a thirteenth-century room reached by a stone staircase from the north end of the choir—is the *Liber Albus* of Southwell. This is a vellum folio of nearly five hundred pages, partly written in a hand of the fourteenth century, then by

several hands of the fifteenth century, and the remainder by a scribe of the sixteenth. The book contains transcripts of the Minster's charters and the records of numerous visitations, in which the faults of certain of the vicars and vicars-choral are faithfully set forth. The most frequent complaints are of irreverence, carelessness and inattention. *Presbyteri cantariales non attendunt ad precentorem chori in cantando.* But that is the venial fault of singing men and boys all the world over. Occasionally, indeed, there are hints of darker offences. *Rebaldus est, scurrilia proferens inter laicos,* is the charge against one, and ribaldry and scurrilous jesting with the laity are clearly no part of a cleric's duty. Richard Sledmere was charged with unlawful games at ball—*illicite ludit ad spheram*—football, perhaps, or a kind of cricket, at wrongful hours. But, after all, these are not very grave crimes, and even stray allusion to tippling should not provoke too severe a condemnation. The Collegiate Church at Southwell had evidently more powerful friends at its back than the abbeys and priories of Nottinghamshire, and so it passed almost unscathed through the furnace of the Reformation and the still more dangerous and grasping hands of the Crown.

For three hundred years nothing further happened at Southwell Minster. Vicar-general succeeded vicar-general; prebendary followed prebendary; new generations of vicars-choral came and went. Then doom descended. It is difficult to write calmly of the fate which befell Southwell in 1841. It was not merely ruthlessly despoiled; its despoilers showed a lack of foresight indistinguishable from wilful blindness. In 1837 the county of Nottinghamshire had been transferred from the diocese of York to that of Lincoln, though it was strongly urged at the time that such transference could not be final, inasmuch as Lincoln was already a diocese of unwieldy size. In 1840 a Bill was introduced for the abolition of the Southwell Chapter as a waste of ecclesiastical revenue. Waste there undoubtedly was, in the sense that the endowments might have been put to better ecclesiastical use, but instead of Southwell being made a new diocese, as had been wisely done in the parallel case of Ripon in 1835, the Chapter was stripped absolutely bare and its patronage handed over to Ripon and Manchester, with neither of which it had the least connection. The canonries, as they fell vacant, were not to be

filled up, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners employed the money from the estates to increase the endowments of certain poorly paid Nottinghamshire livings. One by one, therefore, the canonries ceased to exist, but it was not until 1873 that the last existing prebendary of the old foundation died and the patronage which he had exercised passed to the Bishops of Ripon and Manchester. However, by that time, it had become perfectly clear that Southwell must be made a new diocese in order to meet the growing needs of Notts and Derby, and local churchmen saw with dismay the lingering completion of the old scheme for giving away to others precisely what was required for the equipment of their new diocese. When Dr. Ridding was appointed first Bishop of the newly constituted see he begged hard for restitution from his brother bishops of the livings and endowments of which Southwell had been robbed. The claim in equity was irresistible; the response far from generous. Neither Lincoln nor Lichfield would hand over the proceeds of a single canonry, and Ripon and Manchester were as little inclined to surrender the ancient Southwell patronage. Such were the consequences of hasty and ill-considered legislation by a Parliament which scarcely pretended to take an interest in the real welfare of the Church. Lord John Russell was in a desperate hurry in 1841, and later generations are still trying to repair his blunders.

But what sort of clerics, it may be asked, were the old, unreformed prebendaries of Southwell? Well, they were like their fellows elsewhere. The prebends were regarded as prizes, and were often held by dignitaries who never came to Southwell, save when they were absolutely obliged. The understanding was that each prebendary should keep three months' residence in the year. But as they were allowed to keep it by deputy, some never resided at all. Archbishop Drummond tried to induce the Chapter to change the system and appoint four out of the sixteen to keep a year's residence in turn. But the Chapter would not hear of it. It loved its liberty much too well. No wonder, therefore, that prebendaries have always been a popular target for the wit of the satirist, and that the Southwell dignitaries did not escape. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a certain Gervase Lee perpetrated a quaint lampoon from which we take the following verses:—

Noverint universi per praesentes
That the Canons of Southwell are much to be shentes,
In seeing their church windows pitifully rentes
By not glazing of which they be greatly *offendentes;*
Well said Christmas.

Again they hold of their Virgin Mary
Ecce quam bonum est cohabitare,
And neither keep bakehouse, brewhouse, nor dairy,
Nor any residence nor tell us *quare;*
Well said Christmas.

Again they preach unto their *Uxoribus,*
And say it was written in Aristotle *de Moribus,*
That the right *Summum bonum* to cozen the pooribus
Is to say that the butler is gone out of dooribus:
Well said Christmas.

Again they have taken up three or four song men,
Some of them little and some of them long men,
All at the black pot wondrous strong men,
But the worst voices that e'er came among men:
Well said Christmas.

Again their fine organist whom they do brag on,
Blue points at his breeches, with never a tag on,
That once in a year puts not a whole rag on,
Plays Sallenger's round to us for a small flagon:
Well said Christmas.

Again they have popped us in an ancient Briton
Who bought up ten sermons very fair written,
But now lies mute as a mouse in a mitten:
Well said Christmas.

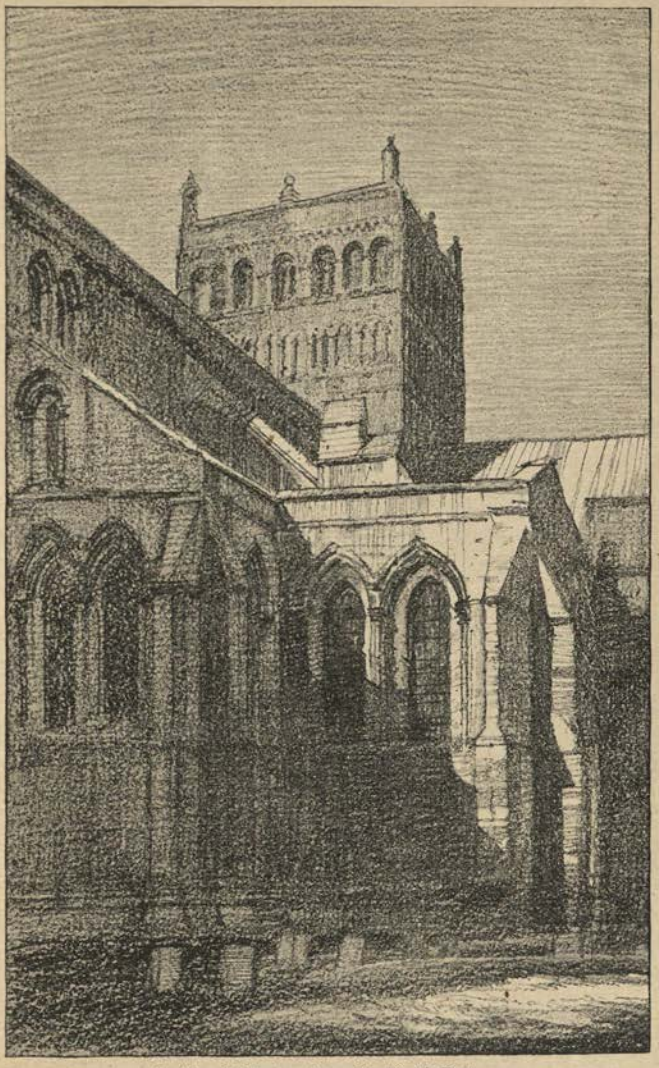
Again they have a Sir Reverend Judgibus
At whose good gifts I do not much grudgibus,
To whom the capon, pig and goose do trudgibus,
Yet, to conclude, he is but a snudgibus:
Well said Christmas.

And now to put all these together,
Coach them or cart them, it fills not whether,
More sordid sycophants are not lapt in leather,
Till which geese be flown, we shall have no fair weather:
Well said Christmas.

Whether well-founded or not, that was a pretty stinging libel, and the Chapter of Southwell did not take it lying down. For they haled the author before the Star Chamber and got him fined £500. Let us hope that Lee was a man of sufficient

substance to be able to pay up! It will be seen that the charges against the Chapter include ill repair of the fabric, a bad choir—but the vicars-choral only got £15 a year and the lay vicars £10—an indifferent organist, poor preaching and a grasping hand on the tithes. Old Pococke, the Oriental traveller, who came peering round Southwell a hundred and fifty years ago, records the interesting detail that the Prebendaries were allowed £20 a year for a public table on Sundays and Thursdays, so that they might entertain the choir and their friends.

Of the Minster itself no detailed description can be given here. That needs a book to itself, and the handbooks are excellent. The first impression in passing through the arched gateway from the main street is disappointing. One would like those spires away from the west towers; the big west window is incongruous with the Norman fabric; and the churchyard is bleak and stark. But that impression quickly vanishes when one sees the whole Minster from the north-west corner of the churchyard and admires the long nave, the massive central tower, and the airy elegance of the chapter-house. Inside one is struck by the solemn grandeur of the ponderous Norman nave, lit up as Norman naves seldom are, and as their builders never meant them to be, by the large Perpendicular west window, of much later date. The clerestory windows are also unique of their kind. Evidently the Southwell Chapter, for all its shortcomings, loved light. The transepts and the north tower arches are all of the finest Norman. Once, of course, there was a Norman choir, but it was pulled down before it had stood a hundred years, and the present noble Choir was built between 1230 and 1250, with the stone rood screen which has not its superior in all England, so elaborately is it carved and with such wonderful skill. Indeed, looked at from the inside of the choir, the ornamentation of the screen seems almost too heavily charged with conscientious detail. It is hard to believe that the eighteenth century Chapter actually stuffed this lovely choir with wooden galleries and hacked about the stonework to obtain supports for their beams, just as they pulled down Archbishop Booth's chapel near the south-west tower because it did not consort with their ideal of symmetry. But so they did. Nothing could be sharper than the contrast between the elegance of the thirteenth-century choir and the sternness of the Norman nave, the lavish adornment of the one and the simple austerity of the other.

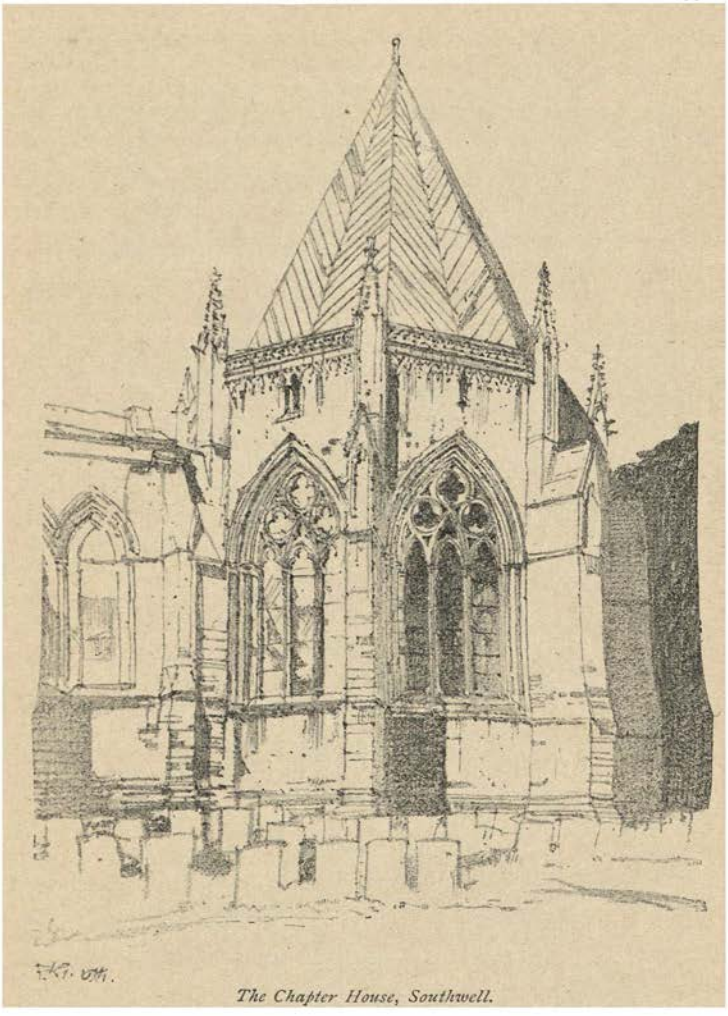


Southwell Minster from the North-East.

The choir also possesses some beautiful modern glass, notably one window of exquisite mauve which, when the sun strikes it, glows like an amethyst, and a kneeling effigy of Bishop Ridding, with face upturned and hands flung out in the ecstasy of prayer, which is surely one of the most beautiful and successful sepulchral monuments of recent years.

Nor should the visitor fail to note the brass eagle of the lectern. This is a bird of no ordinary history, for none has seen stranger vicissitudes. It was fashioned in Pre-Reformation days and many Peter's Pence have been placed in its open mouth. Moreover, this bird stood in the Priory Church at Newstead, and when the fatal day came for the Prior and his monks to be turned adrift, they filled the hollow ball on which the bird is standing with the parchment title deeds of their beloved Priory, and then tossed it into the waters of the lake. And there in the mud it lay for nearly three hundred years, till it was fished up by accident in the time of the "wicked Lord," who apparently sold it to a Nottingham dealer. Some years later a Southwell Prebendary, Sir Richard Kay, bought and presented it to the Minster. The parchments are said to be still preserved at Newstead. No other sanctuary bird that I know of has such an astonishing past on which to meditate, as it stands perpetually poised for flight.

But the glory of Southwell Minster is the Chapter House. As a rule, one is apt to be a little disappointed with masterpieces which all the authorities conspire to praise. But there is no danger of that feeling here. The Chapter House at Southwell, approached from the north aisle of the choir by a beautifully arcaded vestibule, silences all criticism from the first glance through the exquisite doorway into the fairy-like room beyond. And to think that the artists who conceived and the artists who achieved that miracle of carving in stone are unknown! It is only by the preservation of an accidental reprimand—a threat to some of the clergy that if they did not mend their ways they would be fined and the fines go to the cost of the new Chapter House—that the date can be fixed. Their work is a song in stone. Look at the flowers and the fruit and the little animals playing and nibbling among them, some of them quite hid from view; look at the lavishness of the ornament, and the lightness and the grace of it! Some of the heads are defaced both here and in the decoration of the choir, and only a few fragments of



The Chapter House, Southwell.

the ancient glass survive, but the damage is very slight, and if the Roundheads had done no worse elsewhere than they did at

Southwell, there would not be so very much reason to hurl reproaches at them.

These are just a few impressions of Southwell Minster, and mingled with them in the mind of the writer is the cheery, warm look of the rectorial house at the east end of the Minster precincts, with its cluster of smaller dwellings. The big house was built in 1780 for the Prebendary in residence on the site of the old Vicars Court, and the two on either side were intended for four of the minor canons. About the same time the Parade on the north side was laid down and beautified with trees. It was called the Prebendaries' Parade! The name is redolent of the eighteenth century.

The south side of the Minster is occupied by the Palace—now, of course, the Palace of the Bishops of Southwell, but for centuries the house of the Archbishops of York—some beautiful fragments of which still remain, part in picturesque ruin, part most skilfully restored by Bodley. But why the new residence should have been built in the style of a modern villa, when every possible consideration of taste must have counselled stone and old design, is hard to understand. The ancient house consisted of a large quadrangle, with strong walls and turrets capable of armed defence. The State apartments were on the east side, the chapel and hall on the north and the living-rooms to the south. Part dated from the end of the fourteenth century, and part, including the great hall, was of a later period. Southwell was a popular place of residence with many of the Archbishops of York, several of whom delighted to show their magnificence by the erection of noble buildings. John Kemp, son of a farmer at Rye, who was consecrated Archbishop of York in 1425, seems to have been the last of the archbishops who lavished money on the beautifying of his abode at Southwell.

Wolsey, of course, is the great name here. But though he became Archbishop in 1514, there is apparently nothing to shew that he ever set foot in Southwell until the time of his tragic fall from royal favour. Then, in September, 1529, the Duke of Norfolk gave him a significant hint that he had better retire into the country out of the sight of the king. He spoke of going to Winchester, of which he was bishop. Norfolk suggested that Henry VIII would be better pleased if he went to York. So northwards he journeyed just before Easter in

1530, travelling from Richmond to Hendon, then on to Royston and Huntingdon, then to Peterborough and Stamford, and then to Grantham and Newark. When he reached Southwell he found the residence still in the workmen's hands, and so for five weeks he occupied one of the Prebendal houses and did not move into the great house till Whitsuntide, which was the supreme festival of Southwell's ecclesiastical year.

Wolsey's gentleman usher, George Cavendish, who was with him during these trying weeks, put on record the story of his stay, and described how the Cardinal won the hearts of all the neighbourhood by the amiableness of his demeanour and the pains he took to smooth out all difficulties and differences. "He made many agreements," wrote Cavendish, "and concords between gentlemen and gentlemen and between some gentlemen and their wives that had been long asunder and in great trouble, and divers other agreements between other persons; making great assemblies for the same purpose and feasting of them, not sparing for any costs, where he might make a peace and amity, which purchased him much love and amity in the country." It is a very attractive picture. Misfortune had broken the pride of the haughty minister, and the magnificent cardinal, before whom a nation had trembled, was now content to play the part of a good bishop of his flock. A pamphlet, "A Remedy for Sedition," published in 1536, only a few years after his death, said of him:—

"Who was lesse beloved in the Northe than my Lord Cardynall, God have his sowle, before he was amongēs them? Who better beloved, after he had been there a whyle? We hate oft-times whom we have good cause to love. It is a wonder to see howe they were turned, how of utter enemyes they became his dere frendes. He gave byshops a ryght good ensample, how they might wyn mens hartys. There was few holy dayes but he would ride five or six mile from his howse, nowe to this parysh churche, now to that, and there cause one or other of his doctours to makę a sermone to the people. He sat amonges them and sayd masse before all the parysh. He sawe why churches were made. He began to restore them to their ryght and proper use. He broughte his dinner with hym, and bade dyvers of the parish to it. He enquired whether there was any debate or grudge betwene any of thėm; yf there were,

after dinner he sente for the parties to the churche and made them all one."

And this was the lordly Wolsey whose favour had been humbly sought by both Pope and Emperor! If during his stay at Southwell Wolsey had hoped that the king might relent and take him back to favour, his heart must have sunk within him when the following incident befell. We quote the graphic narrative as it is told by Cavendish:—

"It chanced that upon Corpus Christi eve, after supper, my lord commanded me to prepare all things for him in a readiness against the next day, for he intended to sing high mass in the Minster that day, and I not forgetting his commandments, gave like warning to all his officers of his house, and other of my fellows, to foresee that all things appertaining to their rooms were fully furnished to my lord's honour. This done, I went to my bed, where I was scarcely asleep and warm, but that one of the porters came to my chamber door, calling upon me and said there were two gentlemen at the gate that would gladly speak with my lord from the King. With that I arose up and went incontinent unto the gate with the porter, demanding what they were that so fain would come in. They said unto me that there was Master Brereton, one of the gentlemen of the King's privy chamber, and Master Wrottesly, who were come from the King empost, to speak with my lord. Then having understanding what they were, I caused the porter to let them in. And after this entry they desired me to speak with my lord without delay, for they might not tarry: at whose request I repaired to my lord's chamber and waked him who was asleep. But when he heard me speak, he demanded of me what I would have. 'Sir,' quoth I, 'there be beneath in the porter's lodge, Master Brereton, gentleman of the King's privy chamber, and Master Wrottesley, come from the King to speak with you: they will not tarry: therefore they beseech your grace to speak with you out of hand.' 'Well, then,' quoth my lord, 'bid them come up into my dining chamber, and I will prepare myself to come to them.'

"Then I resorted to them again and shewed them that my lord desired them to come up unto him and he would talk with them with a right good will. They thanked me and went with me unto my lord, and as soon as they perceived him, being in his night apparel, did to him humble reverence; whom he

took by the hands, demanding of them how the King his sovereign lord did. 'Sir,' said they, 'right well in health and merry, thanks be unto our Lord.' 'Sir,' quoth they, 'we must desire you to talk with you apart.' 'With a right good will,' quoth my lord, who drew them aside into a great window, and there

Southwell Minster and Palace Ruins.

talked with them secretly: and after long talk they took out of a male a certain coffer covered with green velvet, and bound with bars of silver and gilt, with a lock of the same, having a key which was gilt, with the which they opened the same chest: out of the which they took a certain instrument or writing, containing more than one skin of parchment, having many great seals hanging at it, whereunto they put more wax

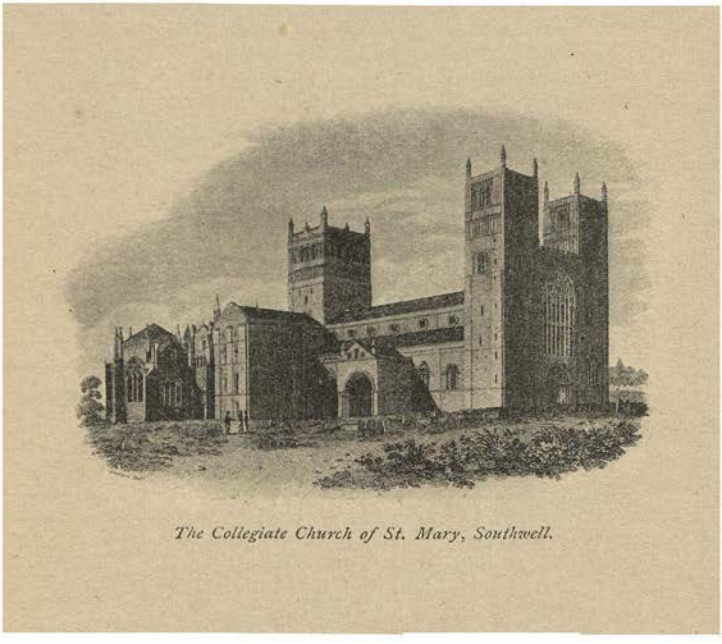
for my lord's seal: the which my lord sealed with his own seal and subscribed his name to the same, and that done they would needs depart and forasmuch as it was after midnight my lord desired them to tarry and take a bed.

"They thanked him and said they might in no wise tarry, for they would with all speed to the Earl of Shrewsbury's directly without let, because they would be there or ever he stirred in the morning. And my lord, perceiving their hasty speed, caused them to eat such cold meat as there was in store within the house, and to drink a cup or two of wine. And that done he gave each of them four old sovereigns of gold, desiring them to take it in gree, saying that if he had been of greater ability, their reward should have been better, and so taking their leave they departed. And after they were departed, as I heard say, they were not contented with their reward. Indeed they were none of his indifferent friends, which caused them to accept it so disdainously. Howbeit if they knew what little store of money he had at that present, they would I am sure, being but his indifferent friends, have given him hearty thanks, but nothing is more lost or cast away than is such things which be given to ingrate persons.

"My lord went again to bed, and yet all his watch and disturbance that he had that night notwithstanding, he sang High Mass the next day as he appointed before. There was none in all his house (besides myself and the porter) that knew of the coming or going of these two gentlemen; and yet there lay within the house many worshipful strangers."

After that Wolsey knew that Henry meant to bring him down to the very dust. A little later, he decided to leave Southwell and move to another of his archiepiscopal residences at Scrooby. When the news of his intended departure got abroad a number of the gentry came to Southwell to escort him through the forest. They lodged a great stag for him to hunt on his way, but the Cardinal would not have it, lest the King might get to hear that he had been hunting in the Royal forests and might take it as a piece of presumption. So, to avoid all suspicion, Wolsey got up at daybreak and was safely at Welbeck before his friends discovered that he had gone. When they heard of it, they took it in good part and rode over to Welbeck and joined the Cardinal at dinner. Much the same thing happened in Worksop Park, where the Earl of Shrewsbury's keepers lodged a stag for him to

hunt and assured him that it would not take him off his direct route. The Cardinal gave them 40 shillings, but would not hunt and made haste to get out of the park as soon as he could. He knew his Royal Master too well to take needless risks. The Cardinal's modest procession through the forest roads that day was on a very different scale from his manner of progress in the hey-day of his pride, when his long array of sumpter mules, carts and carriages was protected by an escort of spearmen, and a great troop of gentlemen riding three abreast, while the Cardinal's own mule was trapped with crimson velvet and had stirrups of copper and gilt.



The Collegiate Church of St. Mary, Southwell.

CHAPTER XI

CHARLES I AT THE SARACEN'S HEAD; BYRON'S LIFE AT SOUTHWELL.

SOUTHWELL'S connection with the Civil War is of the highest historical and romantic interest. Charles I. passed through its streets twice just before the war broke out. He was there in July, 1642, with Howard and Barclay, while restlessly travelling to and fro to test the dispositions of the counties towards his cause. He was there again on August 17, while on his way to raise the Standard at Nottingham. He was there again for the third time after Naseby in 1645, waiting for an opportunity to enter Newark. It was on this last occasion that he entered the shop of a shoemaker, named James Lee, and bade him take his measure for a pair of shoes. Lee took the King's foot in his hand and then refused to accept the order, saying that he was the customer against whom he had been warned in a dream the night before. Nor could he be moved from his resolution, and Charles left the shop very much depressed. News of the King's presence in Southwell reached Colonel Hutchinson at Nottingham and he sent a troop of two hundred horse to attempt his capture. But they arrived just too late, and found that the King had gone.

Once more Charles was fated to come to Southwell, when his last card had been played, when all hope of victory was gone, and when the only question that remained was into whose hands he should deliver himself a captive. Early on the morning of May 5, 1647, Charles and the faithful Hudson came riding into Southwell and turned into the courtyard of the Saracen's Head. There they found Montreuil, the French envoy, who had been acting as intermediary between Charles and the Scottish Commissioners. When the King rode out into the street again, he was a free man no more.

The old inn is not much changed from what it was on the eventful morning which made it celebrated for all time. Montreuil's apartments were those on the left hand side of the entrance. Here were two rooms formerly, a sitting-room and bed-room; but they have been thrown into one, and now form the dining-room of the inn. Upstairs is a large bedroom, with heavy oak beams, which has been similarly converted, and this used to be shewn as the apartment which Charles occupied. However, there is no doubt that the lodgings which Montreuil at once surrendered to the King, so that he might rest after his long night ride, were those on the ground floor.

But how came the King to Southwell at such a moment? The story is worth telling in some detail. Charles had spent the long winter of 1646–7 in Oxford. A sorrowful winter it was! Winchester fell; Basing House, after as gallant a resistance as any in the war, was stormed and its garrison massacred to a man. The King renewed his overtures for peace and offered to come to Westminster. The Parliament's answer was that they would shortly send him some bills to sign. The Scottish army was called down to besiege Newark, and the last hope of anything in the shape of a field army for a spring campaign vanished with the rout of Lord Astley, while marching with 2,000 levies from Worcester to Oxford. Some orders of the general had been intercepted and a Parliamentary force surprised and defeated him on his second day's march from Worcester. Every day brought its evil tidings, and Charles stole out of Oxford in the early morning of April 27, passing over Magdalen Bridge as the clock struck three, with John Ashburnham and Dr. Hudson as his sole companions. The King's love-lock—as it was called—had been cut off and his beard trimmed short, and he travelled as Ashburnham's servant. The most extraordinary precautions had been taken to prevent it becoming known by which road the King had gone, and precisely at the moment he set out, other parties of three left Oxford by the other exits on the Banbury and Abingdon roads. Even so, the vacillating King was quite undecided in his plans. Hudson had been passing and repassing for a month between Southwell and Oxford, trying to get better terms out of the wary Scots, yet Charles could not make up his mind whether to go to them or boldly to enter London.

Taking the London road, the travellers passed through Henley, Maidenhead, Slough and Uxbridge, giving money to the

Parliamentary patrols and guards whom they met on the way, and presenting the passes or permits which had been made out in others' names. At Hillingdon, a mile beyond Uxbridge, the King, after anxious debate, decided not to venture into London, and struck off by Harrow towards St. Albans, staying the night at Wheathampstead. Then after further discussion it was arranged that the King and Ashburnham should make their way into the Isle of Ely and stay at the White Swan at Downham, while Hudson paid another flying visit to Southwell, in order to secure written pledges from the Scots. So the little company separated at Baldock, and the King and Ashburnham reached Downham in safety, where they were within easy reach of King's Lynn and might hope to get a ship for the continent in case the Scottish plan broke down. Meanwhile, Hudson rode hard to Southwell, had another interview with Montreuil, who saw the Scottish Commissioners and drew from them a pledge in writing :—

(1) To secure the King in his person and honour ;
(2) To press the King to do nothing contrary to his conscience ;
(3) To protect Ashburnham and Hudson ;
(4) To declare for the King, if the English Parliament, "upon the sending of a message from the King," refused to restore the King to his rights and prerogatives.

There is no doubt that the "message" referred to was a solemn promise from Charles to acknowledge and maintain the Presbyterian religion, a pledge which he had no intention of giving, or which if he gave, he never meant to keep. Duplicity was his bane.

Hudson, therefore, with this important document in his pocket, set out to return to the King. He did not go direct. From Southwell he went to Melton Mowbray, where he found John Browne, an innkeeper, of St. Ives, who was well known to him as a trusty Royalist. Hudson was at Melton, according to evidence given by Browne later on, on April 30. The next day they were both at Uppingham, where Hudson left Browne and bade him wait his return. Riding off to the King and Ashburnham, he reported the issue of his errand, and by 10 p.m. of the night of May 2, they were all at Uppingham. May 3 was a

Sunday, so they rested till 6 p.m., when they rode on to Stamford, which they reached in three hours. Browne stayed at the Falcon Inn; the others received private hospitality and lay quiet in the house until sunset. Then riding all night—Stukeley says they did not set out till between 10 and 11 p.m., but they probably started much earlier—they reached Southwell in the early morning and at 7 a.m. turned into the yard of the Saracen's Head, where they were received by Montreuil. Hudson's own words are worth quoting. "And so," he says, "upon Tuesday morning we all came to Southwell to Mountrell's lodgings, where some of the Scottish Commissioners came to the King and desired him to march to Kellum for security. Whither we went after dinner."

Such was the King's last journey in England as a free agent. It is not known for certain where he crossed the Trent. There is a tradition that it was "near Gotham." In that case the party must have made a very wide détour, and no doubt the Trent Valley between Nottingham and Newark was full of danger, owing to the close investment of the latter place. We may suspect, indeed, that the object of Hudson's previous détour by Melton, when it was obviously desirable for him to lose no time, was to make arrangements with trusted friends for the King's safe crossing of the Trent. If the "near Gotham" tradition be right, it is not unlikely that the King and his friends rode from Stamford to Melton, from Melton to Gotham, thence to Barton ferry and so passing wide round Nottingham, struck through the forest to Southwell. It would be a long journey to perform between sunset and 7 a.m., but then the case was desperate.

This Dr. Hudson is one of the most gallant figures in the Civil War. So outspoken that Charles called him his "plain-dealing chaplain," he was also so well acquainted with the roads and by-ways that he had been appointed Scout-master General of the Royalist armies of the North. He was vicar of King's Cliffe in Northants, but while war was afoot his parish saw little of him, and even when the Royalist cause was hopelessly lost, Dr. Hudson was always restlessly flitting about from place to place, fomenting rebellion against the Parliament. His end was tragic. During one of the abortive risings in 1648, Hudson and a little company of Royalists were driven for refuge into a moated manor house called Woodcroft House, in the parish of Etton, near Peterborough. The house was stormed and

promise of quarter given to the besieged. But when it was found that Hudson was there, the parole was withdrawn, and Hudson and a few others made their last stand upon the leads. Struck down with a fearful wound in the head, he was thrown over the battlements, but clung in desperation to the coping. A soldier then cut off his hands with an axe and he dropped into the moat. Even so, his dauntless spirit was unbroken. As he was " paddling with his stumps " in a pitiful effort to gain the bank and begging to be allowed as a last favour the privilege of dying on dry land, a brute named Egborough beat him on the head with the butt end of a musket. The victors cut out his tongue as a trophy, and for some days the mangled body was refused Christian burial. Those who justly condemn the savage indignities perpetrated at the Restoration on the bodies of Cromwell and Ireton will do well to remember the cruel end of Dr. Hudson.

As has been said, Charles invited the Scottish Commissioners to dine with him at the Saracen's Head and talk over the situation. They came from the Archbishop's house, where they had taken up their residence, pretending to be immensely surprised at the King's arrival and affecting to know nothing of his determination to deliver himself into their keeping. After dinner, Charles rode out with them to the headquarters of the Scottish army at Kelham Hall. At his repeated command, Newark surrendered; and the Scottish army marched off north with their King and eventually sold him to the Parliament for £400,000.

Such was the most dramatic day in Southwell's history and also in the history of the Saracen's Head, which, when Charles was its guest, bore the name of the King's Head. This apparently was changed early in the eighteenth century, and for no better reason than that the Saracen's Head was a popular sign in that part of the county. A year or two later, Cromwell also stayed at the inn. He had brought a considerable force with him, because he was preparing to meet the Duke of Hamilton's invasion, and some of his troopers stabled their horses in the Minster with his cognisance and smashed the old glass and the monuments. Cromwell remained at Southwell till he received the news he was expecting and then marched off by way of Mansfield to Lancashire. A few years later, in the middle of January 1660, General Monck marched into the town

with a few regiments of horse and foot. It was well known that he had made up his mind to restore the monarchy and bring back King Charles, so the loyalists of Southwell gave him a rousing welcome and Master Mompesson, of Eakring, presented him with a copy of verses. Then Monck marched off towards Nottingham "in the deepest snow in the memory of man."

That was the last time Southwell heard the tramp of armed men engaged in civil strife. But during the French wars the town did its part manfully towards raising a corps of yeomen cavalry, and subscribed £276 4*s*. 6*d*. to the list which lay at the Saracen's Head. Towards this "the young gentlemen of the Grammar School" contributed their fifty shillings. In 1804 Southwell raised three companies of Loyal Southwell Volunteer Infantry, each consisting of 70 men with three commissioned and six non-commissioned officers, and these companies were transferred in 1808 to the local militia.

Here at Southwell we meet with Byron, and though in moments of pique and boyish affectation, it pleased him to say many rude and disparaging things of the place, the little town has long forgiven him. Burgage Manor, at the top of Burgage Green—a stucco-house easily identified by its pillared porch—remains to-day much the same as when Mrs. Byron rented it from a Mr. Falkner in 1804. She came to live at Southwell because it was within easy reach of Newstead, and because the household expenses were likely to be less than at Nottingham. Her allowance was but £500 a year, and out of it she had to pay Byron's school bills at Harrow and other incidental costs which steadily increased as he grew older. So there was not much margin left for the Southwell household. Newstead itself was let to Lord Grey of Ruthin, whom Byron said he detested, "his manners being unlike those of a gentleman and the information to be derived from him but little except about shooting, which I do not intend to devote my life to." Shooting, then as now, was the favourite occupation and subject of conversation of the country-living squire, and though Byron in one letter to his sister remarked that he shot a good deal, he hastened to add: "But, thank God, I have not so far lost my reason as to make shooting my only amusement. There are, indeed, some of my neighbours, whose only pleasure consists in field sports, but in other respects they are only one degree removed from the brute creation." Better than shooting Byron loved swim-

ming, and the little river Greet, to which he addressed some indifferent verses, gave him the opportunity of "plunging with ardour from the shore" into its "rippling surge." Byron was just turned sixteen when he wrote that letter to his sister, and already he had been so madly infatuated with Mary Chaworth that his mother was quite unable to get him to return to Harrow. "He is really so unhappy," she wrote to the headmaster, "that I have agreed much against my inclinations to let him remain in this county till after the next Holydays."

What was there, then, in Southwell, to amuse such a boy as Byron? His mother gave parties to which she invited young ladies in the hope of providing her son with distractions. One of the most amiable and sensible of these girls was Elizabeth Bridget Pigot, who lived on the other side of the green. Years later, when Byron was dead and Tom Moore visited Southwell to collect materials for his biography, Miss Pigot recalled her first meeting with the poet. It took place at one of his mother's parties, and the moody boy had to be summoned three times before he would condescend to appear in the drawing-room and take part in a round game. Byron was then, she said, "a fat, bashful boy with his hair brushed straight back over his forehead." But the pair took a fancy to one another, and became friends. Byron came to use the Pigots' house as freely as his own. Elizabeth played his accompaniments while he sang "The Maid of Lodi," or "When Time who steals our years away." "It is very odd," he once said to her, "I sing much better to your playing than to any one else's." "That is because I play to your singing," observed the sensible Miss Pigot. She was older than he, and there was no philandering between them; they were simply good friends.

His letters to his sister from Southwell are charged with grumbling dissatisfaction. But though he affects to be bored with "this accursed place, which is the region of dulness itself, and more stupid than the banks of Lethe," the chief burden of his complaints during 1804, 1805 and 1806, is his misery at having to live with his mother. "Her diabolical disposition," he writes on August 18, 1804, "seems to increase with age and to acquire new force with time. The more I see of her, the more my dislike augments." So again in November of the same year:—

"She flies into a fit of phrenzy, upbraids me as if I were the most undutiful wretch in existence, rakes up the ashes of my

father, says I shall be a true Byrrone, which is the worst epithet she can invent. Am I to call this woman mother? Because by Nature's law she has authority over me, am I to be trampled upon in this manner? Am I to be goaded with insult, loaded with obloquy and suffer my feelings to be outraged on the most trivial occasions? I owe her respect as a son, but I renounce her as a Friend."

The melancholy truth was that mother and son were two complete incompatibles. Either would have tried the temper of a saint, and neither had the slightest pretensions to saintship. Byron's mother was vulgar both in appearance and in manners. She was inordinately vain of such slender remnants of her beauty as were not swallowed up in corpulency. She boasted of her family in and out of season, and tortured her son by belittling the Byrons. When displeased, she flew into ungovernable rages, and her tongue kept pace with her temper. And yet she had her solid virtues! Though ruined by a graceless husband, she accepted her losses without repining. She struggled to live on her allowance in order to provide her extravagant son with money, and though she cursed him in her rages, she was devoted to him heart and soul. But, alas! she could not control her tongue and her son would not control his sarcasms, and Burgage Manor at times must have been a bear-garden, when the pair of them were freely unburdening their minds. In March, 1806, his mother wrote to the unfortunate Mr. Hanson, who looked after their money affairs and was the confidant of both:—

"That boy will be the death of me and drive me mad! I will never consent to his going abroad. Where can he get hundreds? Has he got into the hands of money-lenders? He has no feeling, no heart. This I have long known. He has behaved as ill as possible to me for years back. This bitter truth I can no longer conceal; it is wrung from me by heart-rending agony. I am well rewarded. I came to Nottinghamshire to please him, and now he hates it. He knows that I am doing everything in my power to pay his debts, and he writes to me about hiring servants!"

Yet it would be a grievous mistake to conclude that there were no periods of calm between the storms. At times, no doubt, Byron was quite content with the holiday weeks he spent at Southwell, and found amusement in active flirtation as well

as in the more sisterly society of Miss Pigot. The autumn of 1806 witnessed some private theatricals, and the two plays performed were Cumberland's "Wheel of Fortune" and Allingham's "Weathercock." In each Byron took the principal part, acted with great spirit, and the performance went off with *éclat*, though there was a narrow escape from unforeseen disaster. For Captain Leacroft, one of the amateur company, was very nervous beforehand, and took several glasses of wine to give him courage, with the result that he became fuddled and "restoratives had to be administered." Such are the quaint surprises of amateur theatricals. Another noteworthy incident of the performance was the rendering of "The Death of Abercrombie" between the plays by a member of the Southwell Choir, dressed in the uniform of the Southwell Volunteers, with two friends—also in uniform—to support him as he fell. The "turn" was so grotesque that Byron was convulsed with laughter, and Byron was not the sort of person to care whether he hurt a singer's feelings.

However, the principal outcome of these amateur theatricals was to provide the gossips of Southwell with a sweet and delicious morsel. The story got about that Byron was paying undue attentions to Miss Julia Leacroft, a sister of the gallant captain —undue, that is to say, unless they were meant seriously. Whether there was foundation for these "animadversions of officious malevolence"—as Byron called them—we do not know. Probably there was. In affairs of the heart, it is pretty safe to assume that Byron was guilty. Anyway, the gossip spread; the scandal grew, and at length Captain Leacroft demanded that the acquaintance should end. There was even talk of a duel, but that folly was happily averted, and it was amicably arranged that the friendship should cease as "the only effectual method to prevent the remarks of a meddling world." Such an incident must have made further residence in Southwell not a little unpleasant, the place being so small, yet we find that Byron was there continuously from the autumn of 1806 to the March of 1807. Why? For the prosaic and humiliating reason that he had no funds to take him elsewhere. So he writes to the faithful Hanson on April 2, 1807:—

"You speak of the charms of Southwell; the place I abhor. The fact is I remain here because I can appear no where else, being completely done up. Wine and women have dished

your humble servant, not a sou to be had: all over; condemned to exist (I cannot say live) at this crater of dullness till my lease of infancy expires. To appear at Cambridge is impossible: no money even to pay my College expenses. You will be surprised to hear I am grown very thin; however, it is the fact, so much so that the people here think I am going. I have lost 18 lb. in my weight, that is 1 stone and 4 lbs. since January. This was ascertained last Wednesday on account of a bet with an acquaintance. However, don't be alarmed; I have taken every means to accomplish the end by violent exercise and fasting, as I found myself too plump. I shall continue my exertions, having no other amusement: I wear seven waistcoats and a great coat, run and play at cricket in this dress till quite exhausted by excessive perspiration, use the hip bath daily; eat only a quarter of a pound of butcher's meat in 24 hours, no suppers or breakfast, only one meal a day, drink no malt liquor, but a little wine, and take physic occasionally. By these means my ribs display skin of no great thickness, and my clothes have been taken in nearly half a yard."

That was the last vacation Byron spent at Southwell, and thenceforth whenever he mentioned the place—and he did so pretty frequently, for he corresponded for a time with Miss Pigot—it was with a curse. "Southwell was a detestable residence," he wrote. He yawned to think of "its eternal dulness," and the "heavy hours he dragged along among the Mohawks who inhabit your kraals." It was a "cursed, detestable and abhorred abode of scandal," and he would rather be consigned to the Pit of Acheron than contaminate his sandals with its "polluted dust." This was certainly not very flattering or complimentary to the Southwell lady to whom his letters were addressed, but he did not forget his manners so far as to omit a compliment to herself: "You were my only *rational* companion, and in plain truth I had more respect for you than the whole bevy, with whose foibles I amused myself in compliance with their prevailing propensities. You gave yourself more trouble with me and my manuscripts than a thousand dolls would have done. Believe me, I have not forgotten your good nature in this circle of sin, and one day I trust I shall be able to evince my gratitude."

There is no need to take all this easy rhetoric too literally. The vain young nobleman was merely airing his superiority

Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

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over common folks, and was simply swaggering in order to impress his country correspondent with his vast experience as a man of the world. If we want to see what Byron really thought of Southwell in his more sensible moments, let us turn to a letter which he wrote to his friend Dallas in 1811, when he was talking seriously. Dallas was looking out for a place in the country for his mother and sisters, and Byron wrote:—

"Now, I know a large village or small town about 12 miles off where your family would have the advantage of very genteel society, without the hazard of being annoyed by mercantile influence; where you would meet with men of information and independence, and where I have friends to whom I should be proud to introduce you. There are besides, a coffee room, assemblies, etc., which bring people together, and I am well acquainted with the economy of Southwell, the name of this little commonwealth."

There we have Byron's real opinion of the real Southwell —a genteel residence for genteel society, and on the whole a very pleasant place to live in.

The reference to his manuscripts in the letter to Miss Pigot reminds us that it was at Southwell that Byron first lisped in numbers. The first collection of his early pieces was published by Ridge, the Newark bookseller, in 1806. It was called "Fugitive Pieces," and the whole edition, with the exception of two copies, was destroyed on the advice of the Rev. J. T. Becher, because of some foolish amatory verses which Byron had not had sufficient judgement to throw in the fire. The second collection, "Poems on Various Occasions," was issued by the same publisher in 1807 and re-issued in the same year under Byron's own name, with the new title of "Hours of Idleness." Miss Pigot, it may be added, never married, and died in Southwell in 1866. Her brother, John M. B. Pigot, with whom Byron corresponded regularly during his Cambridge days, practised medicine and died at Ruddington, near Nottingham, at a great age, in 1876.

Such was Byron's association with Southwell. The Rev. J. T. Becher (1770–1848) who gave the poet such sound critical advice, belonged to a very well-known local family. Perpetual curate of Thurgarton, he became a prebendary of Southwell in 1818, and chairman of Newark Quarter Sessions in 1816. He was a recognised authority on all matters relating

to the Poor Law, and founded a House of Correction on Burgage Green, a friendly society and a workhouse. His name deserves remembrance in these days of social legislation as one who ninety years ago argued in favour of a scheme whereby labourers, paying sixpence a week from the age of twenty, could secure not only sick-pay but also five shillings a week pension at the age of sixty-five. In many respects Becher was far ahead of his generation, notably in his theory that prison discipline should be reformatory rather than penal in purpose, and he was a strong advocate of indoor relief as the only cure of pauperism. Becher died at Hill House, Southwell, in 1848, and Byron enthusiasts can marvel, if the whim so takes them, at the immense ponderosity of the slab of stone that marks his resting-place in the Minster burial ground.

The Assembly Rooms, where Byron flirted on the stage with Julia Leacroft, are next to the Saracen's Head, and an ugly brick building it is, in debased Georgian style. But a century ago it was the pride and the life of Southwell. For there every Monday evening the card assembly met, and the members trooped gaily up the "elegant stone staircase" and played their cards—both literally and metaphorically—in the sparkle of the three elegant lustres which shed light on the grand assembly. For the rest of the week it was a news room; but sometimes the Petty Sessions met there; and sometimes, when Fortune was very kind, there were amateur theatricals or a rare visit from a company of comedians. Not till 1816 did Southwell possess a real theatre, and even then, to quote a Southwell historian, "the public are wisely restricted in their gratification to a visit only once in two years, for about six weeks each period." No wonder the venture failed.

In a corner of the churchyard will be found the Grammar School, an ancient foundation which has been scandalously robbed of its rightful revenues from time to time in the name of progress, and has had a very chequered history. Yet it has produced some notable scholars. Henry Fynes Clinton, the author of "Fasti Hellenici," was there from 1789 to 1796; Robert Lowe was a pupil for two years before going to Winchester; and George Denison, son of the squire of Ossington, and a younger brother of the Denison who was Speaker of the House of Commons from 1857 to 1872, was at Southwell School before going on to Eton. The Archdeacon

of Taunton, as he afterwards became, has a delightful page in his "Reminiscences" about his early schooldays:—

"The schoolmaster was a good, kindly man, and a good scholar; the classes of schoolfellows much mixed. I was taught to sing, so far as such an accomplishment was possible to me, 'Jessie of Dumblane,' 'The Woodpecker Tapping,' and 'Mr. Boney, if you please, Let alone the Portuguese,' by a son of the butcher at Newark who supplied our family with meat. In our equestrian combats among the gravestones, in the Minster-yard, which was our playground, my best horse was the hatter's son. There was another school in the town, which looked down upon us with much contempt. The boys had to pass through the churchyard on their way to the fields beyond. Then we avenged our honour; lying in wait behind the gravestones, we sallied out upon them and punched their heads, occasionally bringing them in gentle contact with a gravestone. Our church was the beautiful old Minster, its choir at that time, as at this, in great repute.

"I never had but one serious conflict with the Southwell authorities. I forget other particulars, but recall two; one, that I threw a brass candlestick at the usher's head; the other that having been upon this sent to bed, I was hauled out of it in my night shirt, and taken to by the usher with an ash plant, in the presence of the boys who had witnessed the assault, and who were not displeased to see the little gentleman taken down.

"It was not till some time after leaving Southwell that I recovered the more polished pronunciation of the English tongue.

"'What is it, George,' my brothers asked, 'that you call your school-feast?'

"'We call it "Potation."'

"'What is Potation?'

"'Ploom boon and nagus,' said I.

"However, I learnt a good deal of Latin and some Greek at the school and was sorry to leave it, though it was for Eton, in 1817, when I was eleven and a half."

It is difficult to get away from Southwell. These little towns tempt one to linger and go prying about for odd bits of irrelevant information. It is pleasant to know, for example, that the inhabitants of Southwell had a chance of seeing Daniel Lambert in the flesh—though no one ever saw Daniel other than in the flesh—when he turned the scale at 50 stone, mon-

strous and immense as Polyphemus himself. That was in 1808. It is pleasant, too, to know that in 1685 the pious Disney, who wrote the most doleful and dismal Diary that ever came my way, fell into temptation in a Southwell ale-house and succumbed. Not that he fell very far. "Blessed be God!" he wrote, "I drank not much. Yet I am a bad example, in sitting and sipping with the wicked and wasting my precious time." "Sipping with the wicked!" That is a priceless phrase. And most pleasant of all it is to discover that in 1793 there was a Ginger Red in Southwell which had never known the bitterness of defeat at all the meetings round about, and, as a four year old, had won three successive battles in one day. This is a generation which frowns on Ginger Reds and holding a cocking-match to be almost as villainous as a bull-fight,

> Compounds for sins it is inclined to
> By damning those it has no mind to.

But the Ginger Red still crows defiance in the old *Sporting Magazine,* though we have tamed his descendants to the uses of a poultry farm.

Here, too, at Southwell Spofforth was born—Spofforth, the best writer of glees, perhaps, that England has ever produced. He was the son of a local carrier, and nephew of the Minster organist, and it was at Southwell that he composed his first glee, "Lightly o'er the village green." His fame was established with "Hail! smiling morn," published in 1799, and he spent the rest of his days in the band at Covent Garden. And here, too, at Southwell, in 1749, William Hutton, the Birmingham bookseller and antiquary, opened a bookshop in his young days, carrying his stock over from Nottingham every Saturday morning, and carrying it back at night. He used to start at 5 a.m., open shop at 10, starve in it all day upon bread, cheese, and half a pint of ale, take from one to six shillings, close at 4 p.m. and walk back. What modern youth would face such a day's labour, and carry his stock both ways? But even this heroic industry could not command success. Southwell, which in those days managed to get along without a bookseller from Monday to Friday, contrived to do without one on Saturday also.

People lived to a ripe old age in Southwell a century ago, and doubtless so good a custom continues to be observed.

In 1772, Dr. Falkner, a surgeon at Southwell, happened to be at Lord Rockingham's house at Wentworth and the conversation turned on longevity. Lord Rockingham boasted that he owned a village containing 70 persons, each of 70 years of age and upwards. Falkner replied that Southwell could show a better record than that, and had at least 20 persons who were over 80. Some incredulity, apparently, was expressed, and to test the matter Falkner commissioned Richard Ufton, the landlord of the Saracen's Head, himself a patriarch of 85, to make ready a feast and invite all who were 80 years of age to dine at Dr. Falkner's expense. Thirty invitations were sent out, and twenty-four came to the dinner, sixteen men and eight women, and the average age of the eligible thirty was 83. The honours of the table were done by Thomas Sawman, whose years were 90, and notice was taken that he was "remarkably chearful," and lived several years afterwards, as he richly deserved to do. What a jolly banquet it must have been, but if there were musical honours how quavering and faltering the note!

Southwell's own river is not the big Trent, but the cheerful Greet, a stream that comes winding down the few miles of its course from the higher ground where it takes its rise. It has been harnessed to turn a few water-wheels, but the Greet has long been famous as a trout stream, and the fishing is still carefully preserved. Young Byron fished and swam in the Greet, though very few of its reaches can have tempted a swimmer who was one day to swim the Hellespont, but the best story I have encountered in connection with the stream comes from a Newark solicitor, named Snart, a zealous angler and a bit of a versifier, in a very small way, in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Snart wrote a book about the Trent style of fishing, an amusing little volume, where the reader is told not merely how to fish, but how to dress for the sport. Flannel next the body was Snart's chief recipe, with thick soled shoes, rubbed well over with mutton-fat, and scarlet, light-coloured or black clothes. "Avoid sitting on the ground," is his sage advice, "lest you catch cold, and avoid water and all flatulent liquors." His own taste ran in the direction of "a little good brandy." I will only quote one of his fishing stories, that in which he describes a wonderful success he achieved with two white snails.

"In the year 1779 I was fishing in the Greet, in company

with two very expert anglers, and at that time knew very little of angling for trout but with a worm ; my companions had plenty of minnows, and knowing the superiority of the bait, proposed several trifling wagers on their skill, which I was induced to accept, from a perfect knowledge of the river, having fished there when a schoolboy. I had little chance with them at first, but some heavy showers having fallen the preceding evening, the water became discoloured, and their minnows useless. They had recourse to worms, and the stock was soon exhausted. We had taken eight brace of trout and about fourteen pounds weight of eels, and were pretty equal in success. Thus circumstanced, we sought for bait under cow-dung and large stones. In the course of my search I found two white snails which I was determined to try. I had scarce put in my hook baited with one when I perceived a fine trout dart from under a tree root at the bait which I caught. He weighed about two pounds. With the addition of a small bad worm to the remainder of the snail I soon caught another trout, near the same size, and immediately in the same spot a third, much longer, with the remaining snail, and I could discover evident signs of envy and chagrin in the countenance of one of my companions who assisted me in landing it. This gave me a decided superiority over them both, and was productive of many jokes, though I did not then discover the secret cause of my success."

CHAPTER XII

WESTTHORPE ; HALLOUGHTON ; THURGARTON ; LOWDHAM ; CALVERTON ; OXTON

AT the western end of Southwell is Westthorpe Hall, long the residence of the Clays, and carried by an heiress into the family of the Warrands in the early part of the nineteenth century. The late General Warrand, father of the present owner, who lost an arm at the Alma, was for many years a prominent figure in the affairs of the county. Westthorpe Hall also has its associations with literature, for it became the home at the end of the eighteenth century of Lady Burrell, poetess and playwright, when she in 1797 married, *en secondes noces*, the Rev. William Clay. This Lady Burrell (1750–1802) was of some note in her day. Heiress to £100,000, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* was careful to record, from her father, Sir Charles Raymond—who was made a baronet with remainder to his daughter's husband and male issue—she married Mr. Burrell, the antiquary, chancellor to the Bishop of Worcester, and Member of Parliament for Haslemere, and published with much applause two volumes of poems in 1793. These show that she had as good a claim as any of the Blue-stocking Set, save perhaps Mrs. Carter, to the title of "learned," and that she also possessed a very nimble and sprightly wit. If she and Fanny Burney ever met, as they may well have done, they must have made a sparkling pair. Her first husband died in 1796, and after her marriage with Mr. Clay she only published two tragedies, "Maximian" and "Theodore," both in the ridiculously stilted fashion of the time, when it was the dream of every playwright to write a tragedy part for Sarah Siddons. Both plays are dead. Perhaps it were truer to say that they never lived.

Here, too, at Westthorpe was one of Southwell's medicinal

wells, St. Catherine's Well, so highly thought of at one time that a chapel was built at its side. The chapel is gone, except for a few old beams and corbels which are built into an adjoining cowshed, and nothing is left of the later Bath House built in 1720 by the owner of Norwood Park. The water was judged to be highly beneficial for rheumatism, and with luck Westthorpe might have become a spa. But fashion turned; possibly the doctors ceased to recommend the waters, and now the spring which supplied the well is diverted into a trough for the use of cattle. And cattle are so fortunate as apparently not to know whether they have rheumatism or not.

Norwood Park, a well-wooded estate lying just north of Westthorpe, was one of the four parks already referred to as belonging to the Archbishops of York. Alienated during the Civil War, it was purchased by a certain Edward Cludd. He was a Parliament man, with a small property at Arnold when the troubles broke out, but he was skilful enough to profit by the misfortunes of others, and estates went very cheap when so many came into the market and money was scarce. Cludd had little sympathy with the fanaticism of the extremists on his own side, and when a warrant was issued for the destruction of the ante-choir in Southwell Minster and so much of the church as was not required for the ordinary purposes of parish worship, he intervened with the Protector and contrived to get the warrant withdrawn. For this Southwell owes him a debt of gratitude. Cludd settled down at Norwood as Justice of the Peace and Knight of the Shire, and built himself a good house. When the Restoration came, the sale of the property was rescinded, but Cludd still continued in possession as lessee of the Archbishop of York. There is a story that he used to marry people under an oak in the park, and Cludd's Oak was long one of the curiosities of Southwell. Its situation was described by a careful topographer as "19 yds. from the coach road leading from the present mansion to the farmhouse and 72 yds. from the gate of the entrance into the park on that side." Cludd was buried under a plain stone, marked E. C. 1672, in the middle aisle of the ante-choir which he had been instrumental in saving. In 1711, during the fire in the Minster, a big beam fell and broke the stone, and it was then removed to the door leading to the north aisle of the choir.

In the eighteenth century Norwood Park passed into the

possession of the Suttons, a collateral branch of the Suttons of Averham. The best known of these Suttons was Sir Richard, the second baronet, who succeeded to the title as a child of four, and found himself, on attaining his majority, the heir to a great estate. He was one of the best known hunting men in England from 1820 down to his death in 1855. Sport was his passion, but unlike so many others of his generation, he did not allow sport to be his ruin. He sold part of his pack to Assheton Smith after a bad hunting accident in 1829, but he hunted the Cottesmore in 1844, and afterwards the Quorn. He kept up two separate establishments, with one hundred couples of hounds, and so long as he was Master there was no subscription to the hunt. When, at his death, his stud at Quorndon came under the hammer, two thousand persons attended the sale, and 5,812 guineas were bid for thirty-two horses on the first day, and 1,806 guineas for seventy couples of hounds—figures which were spoken of at the time with bated breath. Sir Richard had a contempt for politics; and what enthusiasm he could spare from his hunting he gave to music and books. Part of the estates belonging to the Suttons consisted of a goodish portion of Mayfair and Piccadilly, and what was a handsome fortune at the end of a long minority at the opening of the nineteenth century, became an enormous fortune at the end of a similar minority at the beginning of the twentieth. Norwood Park, however, has passed into other hands.

Southwell makes a good starting-point for the exploration of a group of interesting villages lying in the prettily tumbled country between the Minster town and Nottingham. If we take the Thurgarton road we soon reach Brackenhurst Hall, a house much enlarged by its present owner, Mr. Hicking, and justly celebrated in the district for the beauty of its gardens, small indeed compared with the great show gardens of the county, but perfect in miniature. Aubrey once said of the gardens at Deepdene that they were "so ravishing that I can never expect any enjoyment beyond it but the Kingdom of Heaven—it deserves a poem and was worthy of Mr. Cowley's muse." The Italian and rose gardens at Brackenhurst might have moved him to similar rapture. Just beyond Brackenhurst is the little hamlet of Halloughton. This provided one of the prebends of Southwell and opposite the church is what remains of the old prebendal house, a large and gloomy building, in

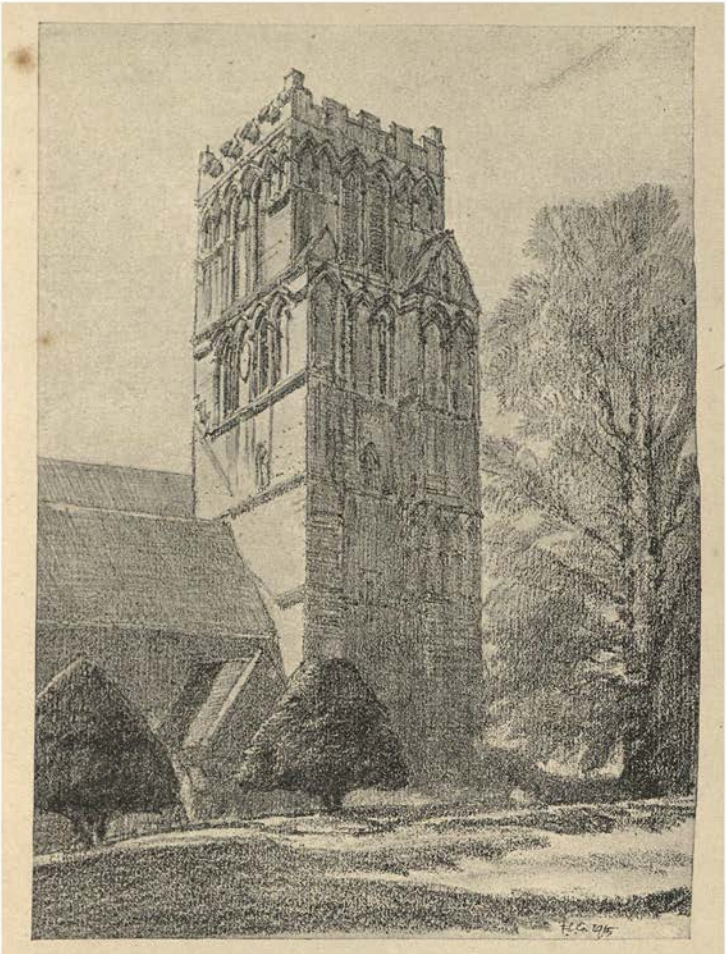
respect of which some strange stories are told. For in 1787, when the kitchen floor was taken up, a flat stone as big as a mill stone was found, and underneath this was a large key. That promises well for the opening of a tale of mystery. One can imagine the excitement with which the spade was plied. But nothing more was found, and the excavations were covered up. However, tales naturally got about, and the owner was prevailed upon to permit another search. This time "the entrance into a cavity was found, enclosed by a circular stone wall, and pursuing its direction, loose earth was found and a continuation of the wall, but at length arriving at water all further search was relinquished." Such is the story told by Shilton, in an ancient guide-book to Southwell, and he adds that Mr. Prebendary Jackson threw some halfpence into the cavity. Why Mr. Jackson thus wasted his halfpence is not clear, except perhaps to mark the year when the ground had been disturbed. That is one story relating to this prebendal house; another is that in the centre of the chimney stack a large recess was found containing many skeletons, mostly of children. But there seems to be no authentic account of any such discovery. Mention of children's bones inevitably started the story that there had been a nunnery at Halloughton, and the walls under the kitchen floor suggested an underground passage to the priory at Thurgarton! How crude is the theorising of the village scandal-monger! There never was a nunnery at Halloughton, and the idea of an underground passage two miles long without ventilation holes is nonsense, as nearly all country stories of underground passages are. In the little church is a fifteenth-century screen, and Kirke White is said to have meditated in the churchyard. Poor Kirke White! If only he had allowed himself the luxury of occasional cheerfulness he might have doubled his years.

Beyond Halloughton the road dips down into Halloughton Dumble. This is the district of dumbles, for there is a dumble at Epperstone, and another at Oxton, and one at Lambley and a fourth at Colwick. It is a curious word, which some have attributed to the Latin *dumeta*, meaning thicket—surely a very far-fetched supposition for a dialect word—while others say that the root is the same as that of dimple. Any way, a dumble is a watercourse between steep banks, often overgrown with brambles and gorse bushes, features, it may be observed,

which are common to dingles, and so dumble is dingle and dingle is dumble.

A short two miles brings us to Thurgarton, the more attractive features of which do not reveal themselves to those who cling to the high road. It is well worth while to turn up the lane to the Hall and the Priory Church, and notice the worn stones of the ancient church way, and the ripe-red brick of the wall which hides the Hall, before reaching the church itself. Here, in 1187, a Priory of Black Canons was founded by Ralph D'Eyncourt, and the noble tower, with its beautiful Norman arcading and lancet windows, and the rich west doorway, should on no account be missed. Inside, the church is dark and gloomy, the chancel being rebuilt in 1854. The Prior of Thurgarton had a seat in the Minster at Southwell on the right of the screen, in a position of precedence over the Prebendaries. One of the curious customs of the Priory was that on the second day in Christmas the tenants used to bring a number of cocks and hens as presents to the monks, and were then regaled to a feast in the great hall. Those who could not come received instead a white loaf—a great delicacy then—and a flagon of beer.

When the Black Canons were dispossessed, the Priory was granted to William Cooper, and for about three hundred years the property remained in possession of that family. During the Civil War Sir Roger Cooper, knighted by the King for his services to the cause, fortified the house and maintained in it a small garrison. Its military importance was slight enough, but it impeded the enemy's free movement and it was within easy relief from Newark, if occasion demanded. The exploits of the Thurgarton garrison were few, but Mrs. Hutchinson relates how Sir Roger Cooper lined the hedges near his house with musketeers, who killed a Captain Heywood, as a strong column of Parliamentary horse passed by to invest Newark. Then the redoubtable Colonel Thornhaugh, in command of the column, borrowed three companies of foot from Colonel Hutchinson at Nottingham and captured the place. The fighting does not seem to have been very severe, for no account is given of the killed and wounded, only the statement that Sir Roger and his brother and forty men were sent prisoners to Nottingham, and that " the booty was all given to the horse." It looks, indeed, as if Sir Roger had surrendered at discretion and probably the house was in no condition to withstand a storm.



Thurgarton Priory Church.

Part of the old Priory buildings appears to have been left standing till towards the end of the eighteenth century, when

Mr. John Gilbert Cooper was the head of the family. He was a man of taste—in fact, he wrote a book called "Letters on Taste"—but unfortunately he had no taste for antiquities in architecture. And so, among other vandalisms—according to modern ideas—he pulled down a splendid old monastic kitchen 66 feet long, 36 feet broad, and 27 feet high, in order that he might build what his contemporaries described as "an elegant brick house." This Mr. Cooper was a very good example of the eighteenth century dillettante. He loved the classics; he read good poetry and wrote bad; he sacrificed to the Muses; he cultivated the genius of Friendship; he was happy both in town and country, and in an age when the average country gentleman passed his days in hard drinking and field sports, he collected books and corresponded with bookish people, and would have given his eyes to be elected a member of "The Literary Club." That he came into occasional contact with the Johnson coterie in London is evident from the two or three casual references to him in Boswell. But Johnson spoke contemptuously of his books, and summed up their author in a biting phrase as "The Punchinello of Literature." It was cruel, but who knows the provocation? Perhaps Cooper had pressed Johnson to read his "Life of Socrates."

As to his poems, the only tolerable lines are those in which he describes how he spent his days at Thurgarton, when he had reached the sad conclusion that the wits at London did not appreciate him:—

Thanks to my ancestors and Heaven!
To me the happier lot is given
In calm retreat my time to spend
With far, far better company
Than those who on the Court depend
In honourable drudgery.
Warriors and statesmen of old Rome
Duly observe my levee day,
And wits from polished Athens come
Occasional devoirs to pay.
With me great Plato often holds
Discourse upon immortal powers,
And Attic Xenophon unfolds
Rich honey from Lyceum's flowers;
Caesar and Tully often dine,
Anacreon rambles in my grove,
Sweet Horace drinks Falernian wine
Catullus makes on haycocks love.

With these and some akin to these
The living few who grace our days,
I live in literary ease;
My chief delight their taste to please
With soft and unaffected lays.
Thus to each votary's wish, kind Fate
Divides the world with equal line;
She bids ambition, care and state
Be the high portion of the great;
Peace, friendship, love and bliss be mine.

No doubt Cooper read those lines to his friends at Thurgarton with a smile; but it may be half suspected that he wrote them with a sigh.

An amusing, very likely a malicious, tale, is told of Cooper's extreme sentimentality. He had had the misfortune to lose the elder of his two sons, and his fond parental heart was perpetually tortured with anxiety for the younger. So one day, when he got news that the boy had a cold at school, Cooper worked himself into a fever and poured his apprehensions into the ears of his friends. At length, in a fearful state of agitation, he exclaimed, "I'll write an elegy." Whereupon, one of his suffering friends drily remarked, "Had you not better take a post-chaise and see him?"

In quite recent years Thurgarton Priory was the residence of Dr. Ridding, the first Bishop of Southwell, from 1884 down to his death. This was before the ruined "Palace" at Southwell was rebuilt as the new episcopal residence, and in the "Life" of the Bishop, written by his widow, Lady Laura Ridding, will be found several references to the delight he took in the Priory's beautiful gardens and the church, which he used to call "the best episcopal chapel in England."

Thurgarton, it may be added, gives its name to a wapentake of the county, and Castle Hill, near the Priory, was the site of a British camp, and in later days the meeting place of the folk-moot. A mile from the Priory along the main road was an ancient hospital—the site is still called Spital—founded in the reign of Henry III., by William de Heriz, who lies in effigy in the church at Gonalston half a mile further on. Between Gonalston and Lowdham the road crosses the Dover Beck, a stream anciently of some importance, for it formed the boundary of this side of Sherwood Forest, and it turned for centuries many a mill on its way to the neighbouring Trent. One of these

Lowdham mills deserves a rather extended notice, for it figures in a pamphlet of painful interest, which describes the tortures endured by the young children who worked in the cotton mills of a century ago. No one can form any conception of the brutalities of the nascent industrial system in England, without reading some of the appalling evidence which was given before the House of Commons Committees that enquired into the subject, or without studying such a human document as the "Memoir of Robert Blincoe," published as a pamphlet in Manchester in 1832, and written by one who took down Blincoe's experiences from his own lips. The title of the pamphlet suggests its contents—"Memoir of Robert Blincoe, an orphan boy, sent from the workhouse of St. Pancras, London, at seven years of age to endure the horrors of a cotton mill, through his infancy and youth, with a minute detail of his sufferings. Being the first memoir of the kind ever published." It was to a mill at Lowdham that this child was sent.

Blincoe, who had been deserted by his parents, was brought up in St. Pancras Workhouse from his earliest infancy. There he gratefully acknowledges that he was "well fed, decently clad and comfortably lodged, and not at all overdone as regards work," though what sort of work a child of his years was set to perform does not appear. But though well cared for in the workhouse he says that he pined for liberty and wept bitterly when he was rejected as undersized by the master-sweeps who came in search of new apprentices. Older and bigger boys were chosen before him. They, too, wept bitterly, because they guessed the fate in store for them; his tears flowed because he did not believe their apprehensions to be true. But a little later word was passed round the wards that boys and girls were wanted for a cotton mill in the country. A most infamous deception was practised on the children. They were told by the nurses and the officials that those who were lucky enough to be chosen had a most enviable life before them, that they would be fed on roast beef and plum pudding, that they would be allowed to ride their master's horses, and that they would have silver watches and pockets full of money. Everything, apparently, was done to delude the poor children into the idea that a cotton mill was an earthly paradise and, as a last foul deception, they were informed that none but volunteers would be accepted. The result was that in August, 1799, eighty boys

and girls from the St. Pancras Workhouse were bound over till the age of twenty-one as apprentices to a firm of cotton-spinners, hosiers and lace-men, of the parish of St. Mary's, Nottingham, who were also owners of Lowdham Mill. In their indentures no specification was made as to the hours that the children might be worked. They were simply handed over by their "Guardians," bound hand and foot, as little slaves to brutal task-masters. So overjoyed were they at being accepted that they actually quarrelled among themselves as to who should have the first ride on their master's horse!

Behold them, then, setting forth from London, each the possessor of two suits of clothes, a new handkerchief, a shilling, and a large piece of gingerbread! The whole eighty were transported in two large waggons, with grated doors which were locked at night. They took four days on the road to Nottingham, and Blincoe narrates that he spent his whole shilling at Leicester in buying apples. Arrived at Nottingham, they were harangued by their new masters, "stately sort of men," according to Blincoe's description, who bade them faithfully obey orders, but who said nothing about lending their horses or treating them as their own children. They slept in the warehouses, and on the following morning, after being taken to see Nottingham Castle, they set off on the last stage of their journey, and when the Lowdham Mill at length came into view, it was so large and lofty that the children thought it was a grand church. The villagers crowded round to see them descend from their waggons at the door of the apprentice house, half a mile from the mill. "God bless the poor wretches!" was their pitying comment.

By that time the children's illusions had begun to fade, and vanished utterly when they were herded into the dining room and had their milk porridge set before them, with rye bread so soft that it stuck, like putty, to the teeth. Then the Governor, the head of the apprentice house, walked in cracking a huge horse-whip, and, a little later, a throng of older apprentices entered, dirty and oily and unkempt, the boys clad only in shirt and trousers. When potatoes were served, the boys crowded up to a hatchway, pulled out their shirts, and received their portions thus. For there were no plates, no knives, no forks, and, of course, no cloth. A few pools of coarse salt were scattered on the bare boards. Such was the refectory! The

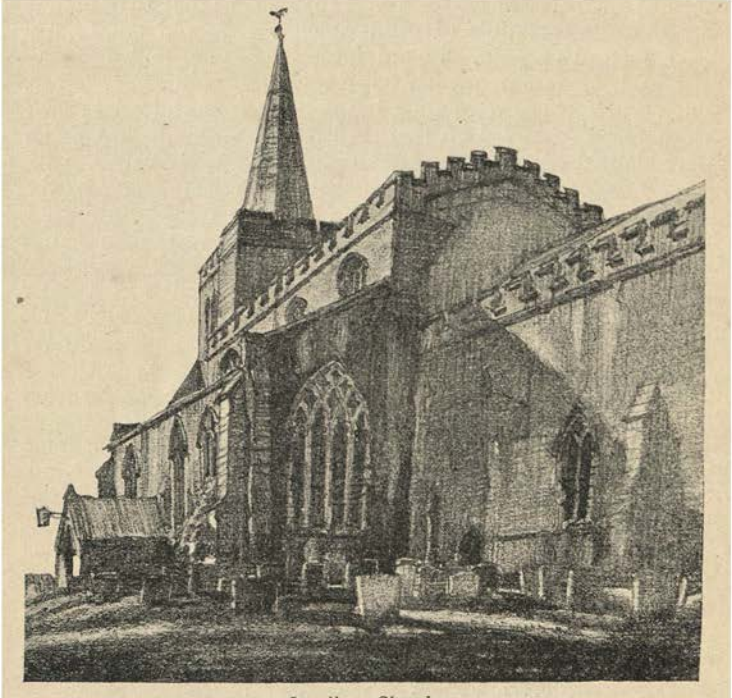
dormitory was to match. The beds were built in a double tier all round the room. The boys slept two in a bed, and at 5 a.m. the Governor entered with his whip and laid it freely about those whose movements were slow. Black bread and blue milk porridge was the breakfast fare, and at 5.30 the little slaves were at the mill, and set to work at full stretch till noon, when the bell rang for dinner. If the mill was full of orders and the children worked overtime, they received one half-penny in return for the sacrifice of their dinner hour. Fourteen hours was the usual day's task; sometimes it was sixteen, and this with brutal overlookers, who savagely beat and bullied the children. It reads like a hideous and monstrous nightmare. Blincoe tried to run away after a few months. But he was spied by a Methodist tailor who lived in a cottage on the outskirts of the village, and was led back to his servitude, the tailor singing hymns on the way and receiving five shillings reward. That was the regular tariff for restoring a runaway child!

Some complaints as to the treatment of the apprentices at length reached the ears of the St. Pancras authorities, and they sent down a committee of enquiry. Sir Robert Peel's Act for the relief of Infant Paupers in Cotton Mills, passed in 1801, had excited a good deal of attention, and the local county magistrates seem to have taken action. Lowdham was near to Southwell on the one hand and to Bingham on the other, where dwelt certain magistrates who took a lively interest in Poor Law matters, and so a new and more roomy apprentice house was ordered to be built at Lowdham, and better food was prescribed for the children. Hence a real improvement was effected. They were provided with knives, forks, and spoons; the bedding was clean, if coarse; they were given Sunday suits and taken to church, and at Goose Fair they had a festal holiday in Nottingham, with sixpence to spend and a regale of furmety. Blincoe does not speak of his masters at Lowdham with resentment. He says that in his time only one apprentice was so injured as to become a cripple, and they were not deformed, as were the child workers at some mills, in knees and ankles. In fact, they were quite "humanely treated," compared with what befell them at Litton Mill, near Tideswell, in Derbyshire, whither the majority of the eighty were transferred when the Lowdham Mill was closed, as it was before their long apprenticeship was concluded.

This cotton mill, which is still standing, belonged to a certain Ellice Needham, whose name deserves perpetual execration. There were 160 boys in his employ. Their food was horrible. The pigs fared better than they, and indeed the boys stole the pigs' dinners so regularly that the animals set up loud protests at their approach. The children were so ravenous that they used to eat the tablespoonfuls of meal which was served out once a week instead of soap. Putrid fevers were rife, and as many as forty boys were frequently down with some epidemic together. Pitch and tobacco were then burnt in their dormitories; and vinegar was sprinkled on their beds. But no lamps or candles were allowed at night, and the doctor was rarely called in till the sufferers were in their death agonies. When, driven to the last moment, they dropped at their looms or their frames, they were thrown into a wheelbarrow and wheeled to the apprentice house. The brutalities were appalling. One of the overlookers used to file the boys' teeth "so that they might eat their Sunday dinner the better." Blincoe speaks of children's heads being so beaten that they became as soft as a boiled turnip. Other details are given too horrible for words, and the reader sickens as he reads. Needham was a magistrate and a rich man, and his colleagues on the bench were deaf to all complaints. The scandal was notorious but nothing was done. So many pauper children were buried in the nearest and cheapest churchyard that Needham at last was driven to distribute the bodies of his victims among more distant burial grounds, in spite of the heavier fees. How could these things be tolerated? It is one of the standing paradoxes of modern times that while public opinion in England was being stirred to its depths by tales of the sufferings of African slaves in far distant lands, while the whole Evangelical movement was unsleeping in its efforts to secure the abolition of the slave traffic, these cruel hideous martyrdoms were being endured by little children in England, and cotton-masters were piling up huge fortunes and founding families on such an accursed system as this. Industrialism was a very Moloch, and the Poor Law authorities—they were not called Guardians till later—offered their "infant paupers" in great batches to the fiery torture.

Lowdham itself is of no great interest. It possesses a very prettily timbered house known as Broughton Hall, which takes its name from a family of some note in the district in the

early eighteenth century. The church is picturesquely but inconveniently situated on the Cocker Beck outside the village. Its twelfth century tower was once separated from the rest of the building; the chancel and the nave are good examples of early thirteenth century work. From Lowdham we follow the



Lowdham Church.

Dover Beck up to Epperstone, crossing the stream at Wash Bridge, and find it to be one of the daintiest little villages in the county, set among trees, with a well kept Hall and grounds belonging to Sir Francis Ley, and a well situated church, dedicated to the Holy Cross, with tower and spire, and a fine nave arcade. Once there were three manor houses in the village—one of them in the days of the Scropes served as a dower house

to Langar—but they have all gone, and the only monument of interest in the church is that of John Odingsells, who died in 1655, and was member for the county in the Barebones Parliament. He married one of the Suttons of Averham, and was doubtless a man of substance. We re-cross the Dover Beck to reach the next village of Woodborough, which has little of Epperstone's pretension to beauty, but possesses a far more interesting church. Woodborough was the home of the Strelleys from Edward III. to Elizabeth; from them it passed through collaterals to the Lacockes, and then the Bainbridges came into possession. Richard de Strelley, lord of the manor, in the fourteenth century, built the beautiful chancel, which has a fine east window, good sedilia, several small brasses, and still retains the hooks to which the Lenten veil used to be attached. Some old heraldic glass survives, and there is a beautiful modern window in the north aisle. The two crosses on the church roof are also ecclesiastical rarities. At the east end of the south aisle is a Jacobean communion table of oak, given to the church by John Wood of Lambley, who was Recorder of Newark and a Verderer of Sherwood Forest, as a thanksgiving for the end of the Civil War. It bears a Latin inscription to record both the gift and the giver.

A mile from Woodborough is Calverton, once the home of William Lee, the inventor of the stocking-frame. He was a curate with a large family and a wretchedly poor stipend, and one day the thought occurred to him, while knitting stockings, that if he could knit a row of stitches with one movement his work would make much more rapid progress. So he invented a rough machine on which he produced a pair of silk stockings, which he presented to Queen Elizabeth. The Virgin Queen had a royal weakness for that particular vanity, but while accepting the stockings, she forgot the sender. Neither she nor her servants at court saw the importance of the invention, and Lee's fate was that of many a genius both before and after. He went abroad in despair and found a patron in Henry of Navarre, but Henry was assassinated, and Lee died in poverty. His brother, James Lee, established the manufacture of hosiery in London, and it was in London that the stocking industry was seriously started, with the protection of a monopoly granted by Charles II. But for some reason or other the trade gradually drifted back into the provinces, and the Calverton curate's

invention proved to be the foundation of the great staple industry of his native county. The church is of little interest, the most curious feature being some sculptured stones in the third stage of the tower, which represent the husbandman's varying occupations during the successive seasons of the year.

The last of this group of villages is Oxton, delightfully situated on the left side of the Dover Beck. It is a small village, with park land on either side of the main street. The church is plain,

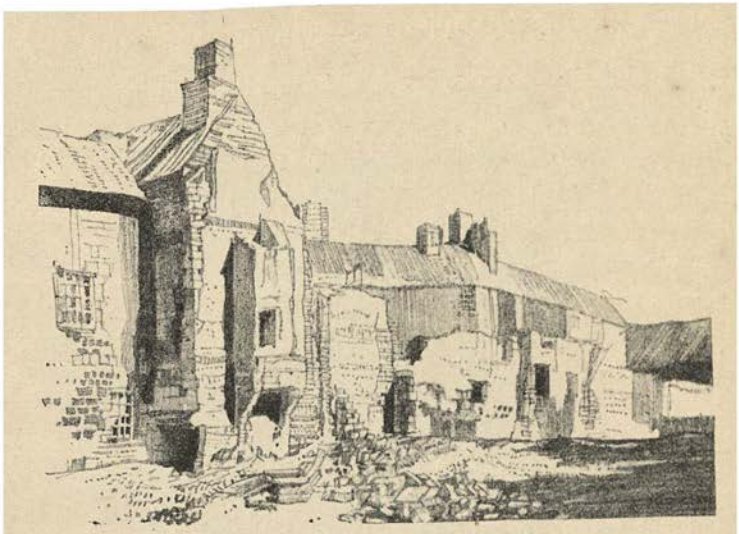
Epperstone Meadows.

with a squat tower. In ancient days Oxton never was quite certain whether it lay outside or inside the boundaries of the Forest of Sherwood, for it was sometimes ruled to be inside and sometimes out. It has been for many centuries the home of the Sherbrookes, who were closely related to the Lowes, and when the last of the Sherbrookes died in the middle of last century, the estate passed to a Lowe, who took the name of his kinsman. It was a Robert Lowe, of Oxton, who, early in the nineteenth century, wrote very able reports for Government on the condition of agriculture in Nottinghamshire, and to him, as a brother

angler, the Newark poet, Snark, addressed the following cheerful lines in 1801 :—

Say, may I hope, nor hope in vain,
When Spring again shall deck the plain,
On Trent's loved banks with you to stray,
And loitering cheat a Summer's day?
Retired from noise and idle state
And all the cares that vex the great,
Recount old tales of wondrous sport,
Despise the vain and splendid Court,
While health shall bless the homely meal,
And genuine friendship naught conceal
Of new-formed hooks, whose temper pure
Shall well the greedy pike secure,
Of fraudful flies, whose mimic hues
No trout or chub can e'er refuse.
This hope shall cheer my pensive mind
Midst dark December's chilling wind,
To frowning skies shall lend a ray
And deck with smiles a Winter's day.

From Oxton to Southwell, alongside the wide open Nether Field of Oxton park, up Oxton Hill, and past Thorny Abbey to Westthorpe, is one of the pleasantest roads in this part of the county. The name Thorny Abbey, a mile from Westthorpe, recalls the fact that it was the site of a once famous thorn tree, which was a boundary mark between the properties of the Archbishop of York, as Lord of Southwell, and those of the Abbot of Rufford. This was called in the old charts the Abbot's Thorn, and is clearly the origin of the peculiar place name. One of the conspicuous features of the district is the number of ancient British earthworks. There is the Castle Hill at Thurgarton, the Fox Wood encampment between Woodborough and Calverton, Cockpit Hill, a little to the west of Calverton, and on Robin Hood Hill, to the north of Oxton, may be seen a clearly marked camp and several tumuli. It must have been ideal ground for the ancient Briton. The hills are not high, but they are peculiarly well-placed for purposes of defence against surprise attack. This particular camp bears the curious name of Oldox or Hodox, and covers a space of more than four acres. It has a multiple circumvallation and a circuitous line of entry. The name Hodox recalls that of Hod Hill, near Blandford, in Dorset, where there is also a British hill fort of great strength and size.



Demolition in Church Street, Mansfield

CHAPTER XIII

MANSFIELD; NEWSTEAD ABBEY AND THE BYRON LEGENDS

FROM Southwell our way lies towards Mansfield, some twelve miles to the north-west. Midway, the little village of Blidworth, perched on a hill commanding what Boswell used to call "a noble prospect," invites a short detour from the main track, in hope of catching a glimpse from its summit of the spire of Newark or the towers of Lincoln. Near by is a noble group of old oaks at Haywood, and the Blidworth rocks, which the antiquaries of an earlier day fondly believed to be Druidical, are of some interest. Blidworth and Blidworth Law play a prominent part in Mr. James Prior's powerful novel "Forest Folk," and tradition says that Will Scarlet lies buried in its churchyard. Rainworth, a neighbouring hamlet, gives its name to the Rainworth Water, once called the Old Idle, which is held by a local historian, Mr. Guilford, to be the true site of the battle where Redwald's son, Regnhere, was slain in 617, and gave his name of Regnhere's wath, or ford, to the scene. The site more usually assigned is Eaton, near to Retford. The Rainworth Water is a charming little stream as it flows down Fountain

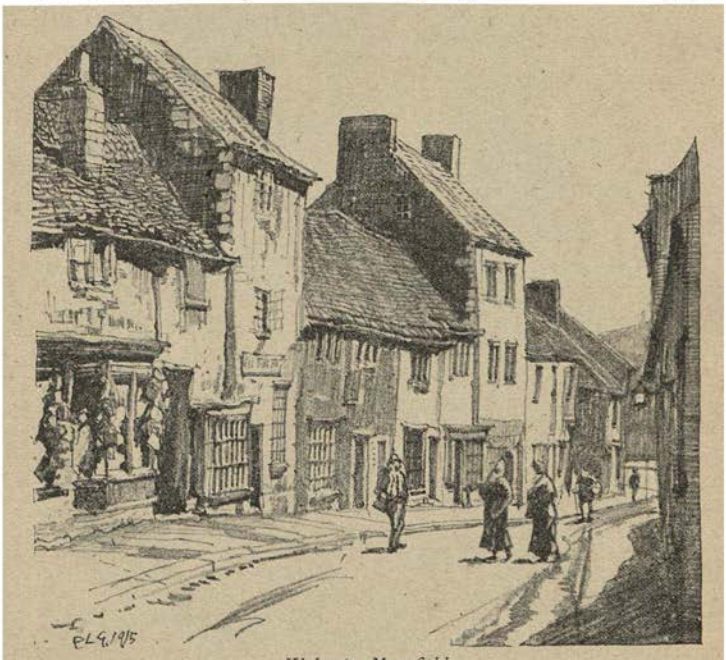
Dale through the grounds of Rainworth Hall, a small old-fashioned place, part of which goes straight back to Tudor days. It is the home of the Notts naturalist, Mr. Whitaker, who has written much on the birds of the county, keeps a small herd of Japanese deer in his paddock of twenty odd acres, and claims to possess in his grounds the finest and tallest willow in the shire. Fountain Dale House, the home for many years of the Needs, who

Union Street, Mansfield.

gave to both Services several distinguished officers in Victorian days, was frequently visited by Sir Walter Scott, at the time he was writing "Ivanhoe," and none would enjoy better than he the legend which connects a dell in the woods of Copmanhurst with the abode of Friar Tuck. From Fountain Dale it is only a mile across country to the entrance to Newstead.

A mile out of Mansfield, on a hill top, a little to the left of the main road from Rainworth, is a stone enclosure which bears

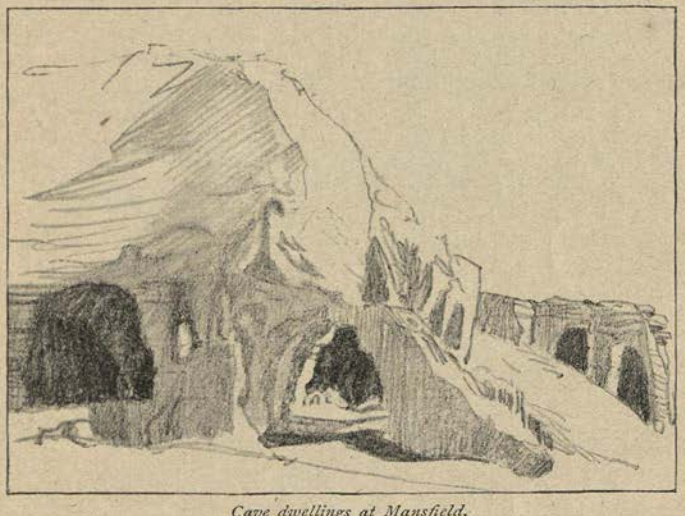
the name of Thompson's Grave. The Charles Thompson who lies buried here was in his day a well-known Mansfield celebrity, who had retired to his native place after a prosperous career of business adventure. As a young man he went to Persia to sell cloth for a London firm which had large dealings with Russia and the East. They had a contract, too, with Nadir Shah for



Kirkgate, Mansfield.

the clothing of the Persian army, and young Thompson lived for ten years at Ispahan, where he acquired a fortune of £4,000. From Persia he transferred his energies to Lisbon, and remained in the Portuguese capital till the great earthquake of 1755. Then he came home with £7,000 to his credit and down to his death in 1784, he was a prominent personage in Mansfield. One of his eccentricities, apparently, was to take exactly the same walk every day down Bath Lane, up Sandy Lane, to

Skerry Hill, over the race-course and across the Newark road to this particular spot in the Forest, which he had marked out for his burial place. He had modestly desired a private funeral, but the Mansfield chroniclers say that the entire population followed his body to the grave, which by his instructions had been dug six yards down into the sand-rock. A large flat stone was laid upon the coffin, and the grave was filled with alternate layers of straw and earth. Thompson desired that a good



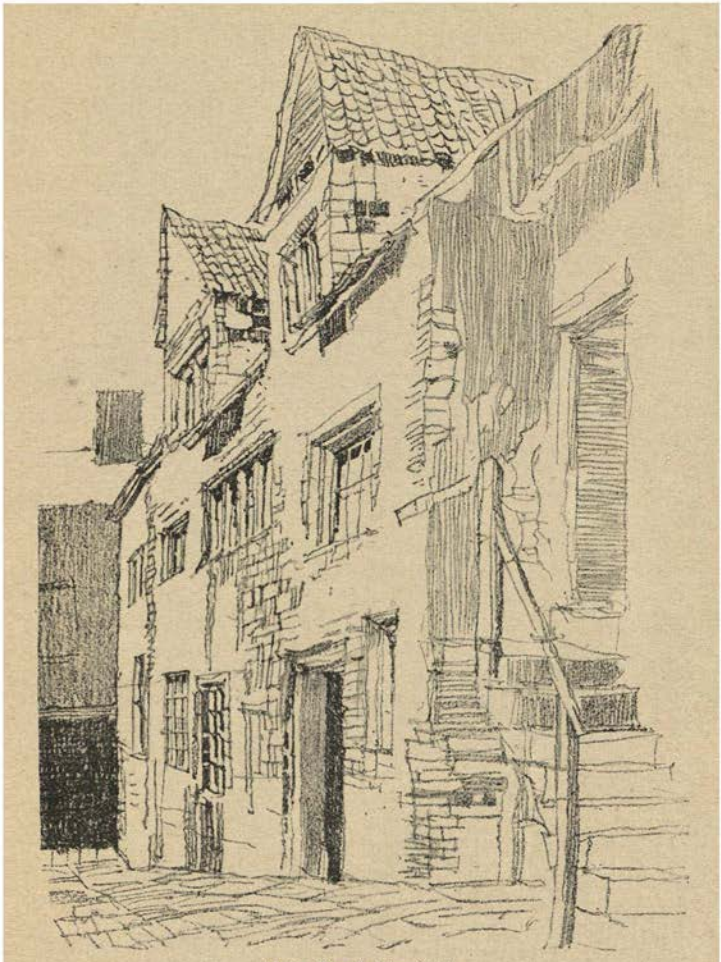
Cave dwellings at Mansfield.

stone wall should be built round the enclosure, and that plenty of trees should be planted within. His wishes were obeyed.

We are now close to Mansfield, and though, when Leland saw it in the Eighth Henry's time it was "a praty market town," none but a native would so describe it to-day. It is, in fact, an overgrown village, and the centre is spoilt by the hideous viaduct which carries the railway. Mansfield was a royal manor, when Kings came to hunt in the Forest, and John Cockle, the Miller of Mansfield, is the hero of the well-known legend, which describes how King Henry II. lost his way while

hunting, and was hospitably entertained by a miller, who, not knowing his visitor, set before him a noble venison pasty, made from venison poached out of the King's own woods. Mansfield is now given over to industry, and the opening up of new coal mines in the district is sure to lead to its rapid development. In the market place is a memorial in honour of Lord George Bentinck, of whom we shall have much to say in a later chapter. It is in the ornate Gothic style which was dear to the middle of the nineteenth century. The parish church is poorly situated and of mixed styles. Some of the Latin inscriptions are of interest. One is of a chemist, "*pharmacopœus gnarus, cautus, fidus*"—the best possible virtues in a dispenser of drugs—while it is said of the Rev. John Firth, who died in 1699, after being vicar for 45 years, "*Cum Domino diu vigilasset, Senio confectus et tandem fractus, in Christo obdormivit.*" Mansfield was the birthplace of Archbishop Sterne, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, and Archbishop of York. He was one of Laud's chaplains, and present with him on the scaffold, and he was grandfather of Laurence Sterne, author of "Tristram Shandy." But the most interesting son of Mansfield is certainly Robert Dodsley, the famous London bookseller and publisher of the eighteenth century. His father, master of the local Grammar School, apprenticed the boy to a stocking weaver. Revolting at the drudgery, young Dodsley ran away to London, and took an engagement as footman to Mrs. Lowther. While thus earning his bread, he wrote a volume of poems, neatly entitled "The Muse in Livery," which attracted a good deal of notice. A friend of Pope's then took him into his service, and he wrote a comedy, "The Toy Shop," which was produced at Covent Garden in 1735. Soon afterwards he was helped to open a bookshop in Pall Mall and quickly laid the foundations of a fine fortune. Dodsley had the luck to publish Sterne's "Tristram Shandy," and the "Night Thoughts" of "Sepulchral" Young, two of the most astonishing publishing successes of his time. He was on friendly terms with Johnson, who always spoke of him as "Doddy," but thought more highly of him as a publisher than as an author, whether of prose or "blank."

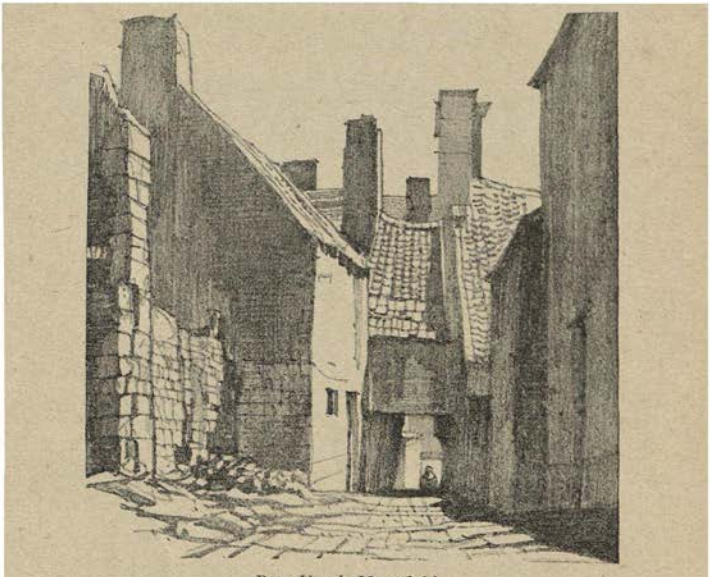
About four miles south of Mansfield, on the stately high road to Nottingham, is Newstead. Once clear of the town's outskirts and of Berry Hill, the broad road sweeps down for a long mile through a fine wood, which still retains on the west side its



Union Yard, Mansfield.

ancient name of Thieves Wood. Worse things, however, than robbery were committed here, for just before the open is reached, a stone may be seen at the roadside which recalls

the barbarous murder in 1817 of a Papplewick girl, named Shepherd. Her assailant, who committed the crime with a stake torn out of the hedge, took the shoes off his victim's feet and was apprehended while trying to sell them. His appropriate end was the gallows. A little beyond, and lying away to the right, are the beautifully situated golf links of Hollinwell, and the woods just before us are the



Dun Yard, Mansfield.

woods of Newstead. The entrance gates are some distance along the main road, opposite the Hutt, once an inn and a well-known landmark in the old coaching days. The entrance itself is guarded and shaded by a magnificent oak tree of noble girth and perfect shape. This is said to have been saved from the destruction threatened by " the wicked Lord Byron " through the intervention of some Mansfield gentlemen who subscribed its price and purchased its life from the impecunious owner. A long drive of over a mile through a beautiful wild park leads to Newstead Abbey.

Newstead " Abbey "—it never was an abbey, but the false name is now ineradicable—was a priory of Black Canons, *Prioratus Beatae Mariae de novo loco in Shirwood*, founded by Henry II. in 1170. The charter bestowed upon the priory the township and church of Papplewick, and the surrounding heaths and wastes within the forest. Its history as a monastic institution need not detain us ; at its dissolution its endowments were granted by Henry VIII. to Sir John Byron, of Colewyke (Colwick) in consideration of the sum of £800. Thus began a long connection which lasted without a break down to 1817. This Sir John Byron, known to his contemporaries as " Little Sir John with the Great Beard," sold his old family inheritance at Colwick when he bought Newstead. A succession of four more Sir Johns brought the family down to the Civil War, in which the Byrons played an active part on the Royalist side, no fewer than seven of them having been present at Edgehill fight. Sir John was given a peerage by Charles I. in 1643, went abroad during the Commonwealth, and died in Paris in 1652. His brother Richard then succeeded to the title. He was the best soldier of the family, and was in command of Newark Castle during the first siege which was raised by Prince Rupert. He entertained Charles II. at Newstead, and died in 1679.

The third and fourth Lords Byron are mere names ; the fifth, who succeeded in 1736 and died in 1798, is known as the " wicked Lord " or " Devil Byron." It was he who was tried by his peers for causing the death of William Chaworth, of Annesley, in a duel, and though he was acquitted of manslaughter it is evident that public opinion ran strongly against him. But, as the poet himself wrote in a letter from Genoa, the legend that the old Lord was ostracised by society is quite untrue. For he made the tour of Europe and was appointed Master of the Staghounds after the duel, and he " did not abandon society until his son had offended him by marrying in a manner contrary to his duty." It was then that he retired to Newstead and rumour magnified and distorted his misdeeds with all her usual malignity. He got the name of " Devil Byron " because he was supposed to worship devils. But the only foundation for this particular libel was that he had brought two leaden figures home with him from Italy, and had set them up in a wood at Newstead. One was Pan, the other a female Satyr, both harmless rustic deities, but unfamiliar to the ignorant country folk, who easily

believed that they were devils. Other stories describe how the "wicked Lord" shot his coachman in a fit of temper and threw him into the coach, where Lady Byron was cowering in a corner, while he mounted the box and drove home; how he flung his wife into the lake, and used to dine with pistols before him on the dining-table. Not the slightest credence need be attached to the fantastic broidery of rustic imagination. What is true is that the old lord for many years lived practically alone at Newstead, that to spite the son with whom he had quarrelled, but who predeceased him, he ruthlessly cut down the timber round the house, that he suffered the place to fall into a shocking condition of dilapidation and decay, and that being morose and savage in temper, he was hated and feared by the few with whom he came into contact.

During this lord's long tenure of Newstead, lasting over sixty years, Horace Walpole paid the place a visit in 1760. His description is of special interest because it shows that the ruinous decay must have occurred chiefly at the latter end of the old lord's life.

"As I returned I saw Newstead and Althorpe: I like both. The former is the very abbey. The great east window of the church remains and connects with the house: the hall entire, the refectory entire, the cloisters untouched, with the ancient cistern of the convent and their arms on it, a private chapel quite perfect. The park, which is still charming, has not been so much unprofaned; the present lord has lost large sums and paid part in old oaks, five thousand pounds' worth of which have been cut near the house. In recompense he has built two baby forts, to pay his country in castles for the damage done to the navy, and planted a handful of Scotch firs, that look like ploughboys dressed in old family liveries for a public day! In the hall is a very good collection of pictures, all animals; the refectory, now the great drawing-room, is full of Byrons; the vaulted roof remaining—but the windows have new dresses made for them by a Venetian tailor.

"Newstead delighted me. There is grace and Gothic indeed —good chambers and a comfortable house. The monks formerly were the only sensible people that had really good mansions."

In a recently published book, "Livingstone and Newstead," Mrs. Fraser—the present owner of the Newstead estate—

Newstead Abbey. Lithograph by W. Gauci, from a drawing by M. Webster.

suggests another reason to account for the old lord's undoubted poverty during his closing years. She says that a large lake formerly existed above the level of the present lake at Newstead, with a mill standing on the dam between the two, and that the miller, who had been harshly evicted by Lord Byron, vowed vengeance and secretly weakened the dam. This at length gave way and caused such a disastrous flood that Lord Byron had to pay £60,000 in damages. If this story be true—and Mrs. Fraser adds that in her childhood there was "a high grass-grown bank which looked very like the remains of a dam running at right angles above the upper lake below the Rock Cottages pond"—it is very strange that no mention is made of the incident in the local histories.

The old lord, as has been said, died in 1798, and the heir was his great-nephew, George Gordon Byron, then a boy of ten. He was the son of "Mad Jack Byron," gambler, profligate and spendthrift, who, after eloping with the Marchioness of Carmarthen, by whom he had a daughter, married at her death Catherine Gordon of Gight, and speedily wasted almost the whole of her fortune. He had died in 1791, and his widow for the next few years lived at Aberdeen. There is a legend that on the death of the old lord Mrs. Byron took her boy to see Newstead. As the carriage was checked at the toll gate, she asked the woman to whom the property belonged, and was told that the owner had just died. "And who is the next heir?" she asked. "They say he is a little boy who lives in Aberdeen." "And this is he, bless him!" cried the nurse, who was also in the carriage, kissing Byron as he sat on her lap. Thus are silly legends made! Either the incident took place years before, or else the story is pure fiction. Byron was the last boy in the world to be sitting quietly in a nurse's lap at the age of ten, and the nurse who dared to kiss him in public would not lightly have escaped his wrath.

The Byrons did not enter into residence at Newstead. Poverty forbade, and they were glad to find a tenant in Lord Grey of Ruthin. As we have already seen, they took up their abode at Southwell, and it was not till 1808, when Byron had finished with Cambridge, that he went to live in the halls of his forefathers. Even then, though little more than twenty, he was embarrassed with debts—"cursedly dipped," as he put it—and contemplated the certainty of being nine or ten thousand

pounds to the bad by the time he attained his majority. He had to spend a good deal on making the place habitable, and during the autumn of that year lived very quietly, "returning no visits," riding a little, but doing no shooting or hunting, and working hard at his verses. "I am a mighty scribbler," said he. A rich marriage was the most obvious solution of his difficulties, and as he wrote to Hanson, "I suppose it will end in my marrying a golden dolly or blowing my brains out." His mother, poor woman, strongly urged the same course. "I wish to God," she wrote despairingly, "he would exert himself and retrieve his affairs. He must marry a woman of fortune this spring: love matches is all nonsense. Let him make use of the talents God has given him! He is an English peer and has all the advantages of that situation."

Byron's attachment to Newstead was deep and sincere, and its gloom and decay appealed strongly to his romantic temperament.

In the home of my sires as the clear moonbeam falls
Through silver and shade o'er its desolate walls,
It shines from afar like the glories of old;
It gilds but it warms not—'tis dazzling but cold.

Let the sunbeam be bright for the younger of days,
'Tis the light that should shine on a race that decays,
When the stars are on high and the dews on the ground
And the long shadow lingers the ruin around.

And the step that o'er echoes the gray floor of stone
Falls sullenly now, for 'tis only my own,
And sunk are the voices that sounded in mirth
And empty the goblet and dreary the hearth.

And vain was each effort to raise and recall
The brightness of old to illumine our hall,
And vain was the hope to avert our decline,
And the fate of my fathers has faded to mine.

And theirs was the wealth and the fulness of fame,
And mine to inherit too haughty a name,
And theirs were the times and the triumphs of yore,
And mine to regret but renew them no more.

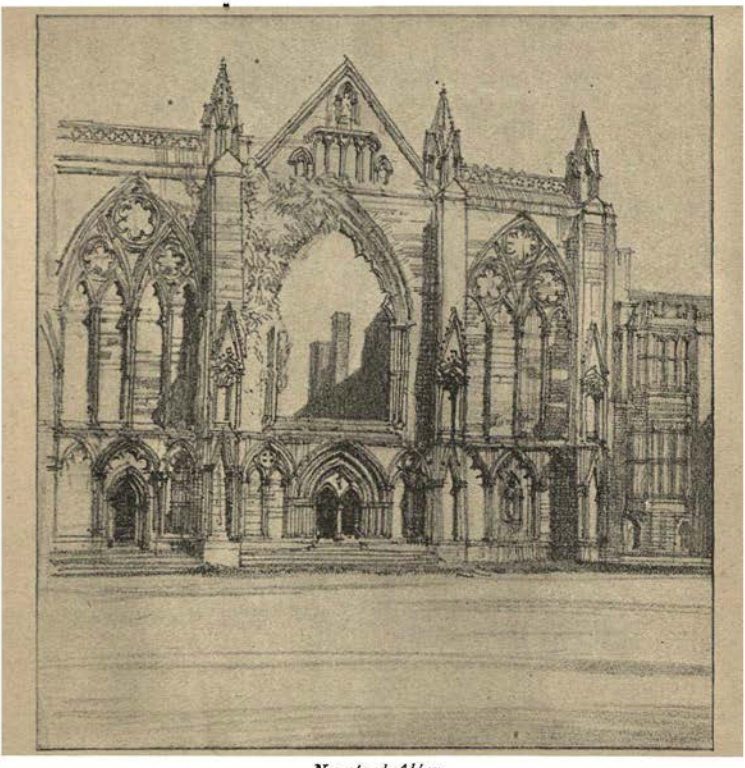
And Ruin is fixt on my tower and my wall,
Too hoary to fade and too massy to fall,
It tells not of Time's or the tempest's decay,
But the wreck of the line that has held it in sway.

So when Hanson, his man of affairs, suggested selling Newstead, Byron rejected the proposal with indignation.

"Newstead and I," he wrote to his mother, "stand or fall together. I have now lived on the spot, I have fixed my heart upon it, and no pressure, present or future, shall induce me to barter the last vestige of our inheritance. I have that pride within me that will enable me to support difficulties. I can endure privations, but could I obtain in exchange for Newstead the first fortune in the country I would reject the proposition. Set your mind at ease on that score. Mr. Hanson talks like a man of business on the subject: I feel like a man of honour and I will not sell Newstead."

He repeated the same passionate declaration a month or two later. "The Abbey and I shall stand or fall together, and were my head as grey and defenceless as the arch of the Priory I would abide by this resolution." Still in that mood he left for Lisbon, with the Nottingham tradespeople loudly clamouring for their money and declaring that they would be ruined if they were not paid. That was still the vein in which, eighteen months later, he replied from Athens to similar suggestions. "On the subject of Newstead, I answer as before, 'No.' If it is necessary to sell, sell Rochdale . . . My only tie to England is Newstead, and that once gone neither interest nor inclination lead me northward." Byron returned home in July, 1811, and on August 1 his mother died. The night after, as Mrs. Byron's maid was passing the room where the body lay, she heard a groan and entered. She found Byron sitting in the dark at the bedside and when she spoke to him he burst into tears and exclaimed, "Oh, Mrs. By, I had but one friend in the world and she is gone." On the day of the funeral, he watched the cortège slowly move away, but refused to accompany it. When it was out of sight he turned to his servant Rushton and bade him bring the boxing-gloves. "Only his silence, abstraction and unusual violence," says the chronicler, "betrayed to his antagonist the state of his feelings." It was an odd way of showing grief, but Byron was no ordinary being, and the tears he shed beside his mother's corpse were a truer expression of his feelings than would have been the customary observance of the ordinary filial conventions. By a strange coincidence, on the very same day that his mother died, one of his old Cambridge friends, C. S. Matthews, by far the most

brilliant member of his set at Cambridge, was drowned whilst bathing in the Cam. The double loss affected Byron deeply for a time, and so he invited two other Trinity friends to stay with him. "I am solitary," he wrote to Hodgson, "and I



Newstead Abbey.

never felt solitude irksome before." Hodgson and Harness went to Newstead, and the latter placed on record some years later his recollections of his three weeks' visit in December, 1811. He said :—

"When Byron returned, with the MS. of the first two cantos

of 'Childe Haróld' in his portmanteau, I paid him a visit at Newstead. It was winter—dark, dreary weather—the snow upon the ground; and a straggling, gloomy, depressive, partially inhabited place the Abbey was. Those rooms, however, which had been fitted up for residence were so comfortably appointed, glowing with crimson hangings, and cheerful with capacious fires, that one soon lost the melancholy feeling of being domiciled in an extensive ruin.

"Many tales are related or fabled of the orgies which in the poet's early youth had made clamorous these ancient halls of the Byrons. I can only say that nothing in the shape of riot or excess occurred when I was there. The only other visitor was Dr. Hodgson, the translator of 'Juvenal,' and nothing could be more quiet and regular than the course of our days. Byron was retouching, as the sheets passed through the press, the stanzas of 'Childe Harold.' Hodgson was at work in getting out the ensuing number of the *Monthly Review*, of which he was principal editor. I was reading for my degree. When we met, our general talk was of poets and poetry—of who could and who could not write; but it occasionally rose into very serious discussions on religion. Byron, from his early education in Scotland, had been taught to identify the principles of Christianity with the extreme dogmas of Calvinism. His mind had thus imbued a most miserable prejudice, which appeared to be the only obstacle to his hearty acceptance of the Gospel. Of this error we were most anxious to disabuse him. The chief weight of the argument rested with Hodgson who was older, a good deal, than myself. I cannot even now—at a distance of more than 50 years—recall those conversations without a deep feeling of admiration for the judicious zeal and affectionate earnestness (often speaking with tears in his eyes) which Dr. Hodgson evinced in his advocacy of the truth.

"The only difference, except perhaps in the subjects talked about, between our life at Newstead Abbey and that of the great families around us, was the hours we kept. It was, as I have said, winter, and the days were cold, and, as nothing tempted us to rise early, we got up late. This flung the routine of the day rather backward, and we did not go early to bed. My visit to Newstead lasted about three weeks, when I returned to Cambridge to take my degree."

It will be observed that Harness refers to the "orgies" which were "related or fabled" as having taken place at Newstead in the poet's early youth. The tradition of those excesses has not lost ground during the intervening century. Indeed, it has grown stronger rather than weaker, not because any more evidence has been forthcoming, but simply because of the incurable tendency of human kind to believe the worst. People are determined to believe in Byron's badness. They feel that the stories correspond so well with their notions of his wild and romantic character, that they ought to be true, whether true or not. Nor can it be denied that during one period of Byron's residence at Newstead, some lively and possibly scandalous scenes took place, which formed the basis of the legends. Byron himself, in a letter to John Murray from Ravenna in 1820, says:—"We went down to Newstead together, where I had got a famous cellar, and monks' dresses from a masquerade warehouse. We were a company of seven or eight, with an occasional neighbour or so for visitors, and used to sit up late in our friars' dresses, drinking burgundy, claret, champagne, and what not, out of the skull-cup and all sorts of glasses, and buffooning all round the house, in our conventual garments. Matthews always denominated me 'the Abbot,' and never called me by any other name, in his good humours, to the day of his death." Buffooning all round the house! That phrase of Byron's really sums up the essential facts. There is no need to believe the widely-disseminated stories of disgraceful, unspeakable orgies. Byron took down with him to the ruinous old place a party of high-spirited young men, and they set themselves to have a good time. Things were no worse than that.

One of the jovial party thus describes how they spent their days:—

"Ascend, then, with me the hall steps, that I may introduce you to my Lord and his visitants. But have a care how you proceed; be mindful to go there in broad daylight, and with your eyes about you. For, should you make any blunder, should you go to the right of the hall steps, you are laid hold of by a bear; and should you go to the left, your case is still worse, for you run full against a wolf! Nor, when you have attained the door, is your danger over; for the hall being decayed, and, therefore, standing in need of repair, a bevy of inmates are very probably banging at one end of it with their pistols; so that if

you enter without giving loud notice of your approach, you have only escaped the wolf and the bear to expire by the pistol shots of the merry monks of Newstead.

"Our party consisted of Lord Byron and four others, and was, now and then, increased by the presence of a neighbouring parson. As for our way of living, the order of the day was generally thus—for breakfast we had no set hour, but each one suited his own convenience—everything remaining on the table till the whole party had done; though had one wished to breakfast at the early hour of ten, one would have been rather lucky to find any of the servants up. Our average hour of rising was one. I, who generally got up between eleven and twelve, was always —even when an invalid—the first of the party, and was esteemed a prodigy of early rising. It was frequently past two before the breakfast party broke up. Then, for the amusements of the morning there was reading, fencing, single-stick, or shuttlecock in the great room; practising with pistols in the hall, walking, riding, cricket, sailing on the lake, playing with the bear or teasing the wolf. Between seven and eight we dined; and our evening lasted from that time till one, two, or three in the morning. The evening diversions may be easily conceived.

"I must not omit the handing round, after dinner, on the removal of the cloth, a human skull filled with burgundy. After revelling in choice viands and the finest wines of France, we adjourned to tea, where we amused ourselves with reading, or improving conversation—each according to his fancy—and after sandwiches, &c., retired to rest. A set of monkish dresses, which had been provided, with all the proper apparatus of crosses, beads, tonsures, &c., often gave a variety to our appearance and to our pursuits."

Moreover, it is to be remembered that this little coterie was not composed of the ordinary hard-drinking young men of fashion. Byron, Hobhouse, Matthews, Harness, and Scrope Davies were men of brains; they read and versified amid their revellings; they indulged in no mere sordid debauch. There is, indeed, a story of a pretty girl, called Gordon, acting as a page-boy, much to the jealousy of certain housemaids at the abbey, but that is the worst scandal for which there is any evidence, and even that seems to depend on the gossip of an old woman who was interviewed by Washington Irving many years afterwards, when she was over 80, and her memory was

probably treacherous. "It is affirmed, on the most undoubted authority," wrote an anonymous correspondent of the *Devizes Gazette* in 1828, "that there never was a woman of that description at the abbey, and that so far from its being the resort of abandoned persons, and a place of riot and dissoluteness, it was one of severe study, seclusion, and Pythagorean abstinence." That, of course, is the other extreme, which is reduced to its proper value by Byron's own admissions about the well-stocked cellar. If there had been nothing but pulse and beans those gay Cambridge undergraduates would soon have hastened off. But the fact remains that, with all their high spirits and buffooning, many hours were given to study, and there are still extant letters from Byron to his friend Hodgson, in which he refuses to take as excuse for not joining the party at Newstead the reason that Hodgson wanted to finish a certain poem. Come and finish it here, said Byron, hinting that he, too, was cultivating the Muse. Perhaps it is worth pointing out that Hodgson became Provost of Eton in later years, while Harness developed into a Prebendary of St. Paul's.

As for their masquerading as monks, that idea was probably suggested partly by their surroundings at Newstead and partly by the proceedings of the Hell Fire Club at Medmenham Abbey, on the Thames, near Henley, some twenty or thirty years before their time. The proceedings of that club had also been magnified by rumour out of all relation to the truth. It was composed of fast young men of fashion, with some older men who ought to have known better, and it was eventually suppressed, but those of its members who sobered down after sowing their wild oats, always emphatically declared that the reports of their debaucheries were wildly exaggerated. So at Newstead. There would be a lot of noise, a lot of drinking, and a lot of buffoonery, and the most absurd reports soon got abroad. Matthews, who, as Byron said, was "the hero of them all," professed to be a convinced atheist, and a scoffer at all religion—a not uncommon pose with the clever undergraduate of all periods. He may have been the ringleader in the desecration of the ancient graves in the cloisters—though it is also to be remembered that there were strong traditions of buried treasure at Newstead, and the disturbance of graves was quite possibly only incidental to the search. However, the countryside was justly scandalised when it became known that the skull of one of the old monks had

been mounted in silver and turned into a drinking cup, and that the young lord had composed an epigram upon it:—

Start not, nor deem my spirit fled.
In me behold the only skull,
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.

If Byron had settled down into a respectable middle-aged peer, the legends of his youthful orgies at Newstead in 1809 would have speedily faded away. But as he passed from scandal to scandal in his short career, the early legends gathered fresh accretions.

There is a capital example of this in connection with this very skull. An anonymous writer in "Eliza Cook's Journal," in 1851, describes a visit paid to Newstead and, speaking of the skull-cup, narrates the following story as being "firmly believed" by the inhabitants of the Abbey. She says that the skull-cup was first produced at a dinner, which was graced by the presence of a number of ladies. No sooner was it filled with wine than the door opened and the figure of a headless monk appeared at the threshold. The ladies screamed and fainted—as they had every right to do. Lord Byron alone faced the spectre, challenged it to state its errand, and was warned in precise language of the early death which was to overtake him. And, says the writer, it all came "exactly true." If there were any vestige of truth in this tale, it would surely be one of the world's best-known spectre stories. Yet it does not even receive mention in the biographies of the poet, and if anything of the sort had taken place when the ghastly cup was first filled, it assuredly would never have been filled again, even by those light-hearted boys. Nor is there any evidence to corroborate the story that Byron's death was "foretold" in this way, though in his last illness at Missolonghi he does seem to have asked that the ugliest crone in the neighbourhood might be called in to pronounce whether his sickness was dangerous or not.

Newstead Abbey had, indeed, its ghosts. Of course it had. It was the very place for them, what with its ruins, its graves, its memories of outrage done to Holy Church, its echoes of "far-off, sad, unhappy things, and battles long ago," its associations with deeds of violence, and with a once famous family falling, like itself, into rapid decay.

Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle
Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once smiling garden, the hemlock and thistle
Have choked up the rose which late bloomed in the way.

In such a spot it would have been passing strange if some one poor, solitary ghost out of so many did not contrive to revisit occasionally the glimpses of the moon. It is said that Byron once saw something "black and hairy" in the hall; that Colonel Wildman once heard the sound of the iron roller on the gravel when the roller itself was securely locked up; that in Byron's room, which adjoined the ruined great window of the Abbey, strange moaning sounds were heard, as of low, melancholy music. The servants—so reported Washington Irving—were all afraid of ghosts in Colonel Wildman's day, and Mrs. Fraser says that when she was a child it was a firm rule at the Abbey that if any servant spoke of having seen a ghost, he or she left the next morning. A "shapeless black mass with glaring eyes"—Mrs. Fraser says her father kept a black retriever—was believed to haunt the cloisters. A column of cold white vapour used to arise in one of the pannelled bedrooms. "Little Sir John with the Great Beard" was said to sit in an ebony chair in the library below his portrait, quietly reading a book. On blustering autumn days the sound of an invisible troop of riders might be heard in the park and a woman's voice crying, "Speak to me, my Lord Byron, only speak to me!" Such stories will never lack their true believers, and the noises of the night make an eerie sound under roofs over which so many centuries have flown. But Newstead also had its special ghost—a goblin friar, whose appearance always portended evil to the master of the house.

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
Who sitteth by Norman stone,
For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air
And his mass of the days that are gone.

When an heir is born, he's heard to mourn
And when aught is to befall
That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.

His form you may trace, but not his face,
'Tis shadowed by his cowl;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

Say naught to him as he walks his hall,
And he'll say naught to you,
He sweeps along in his dusky pall,
As o'er the grass the dew.

Then grammercy! for the Black Friar;
Heaven sain him; fair or foul,
And whatso'er may be his prayer,
Let ours be for his soul.

Byron is said to have seen the Black Friar—whom he thus introduced into the last canto of "Don Juan"—a month before the luckless marriage, which brought woe to himself and to all connected with him.

The Black Friar's appearance always accompanied any change of ownership at Newstead, and Mrs. Fraser narrates how Mrs. Sheppard, the housekeeper, who had spent many years in the service of Colonel Wildman, resolved to watch for the Friar's appearance on the night before the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Webb. So she sat up all night in the Monk's Chamber, reached by a turret stair from Byron's own room, and lit two candles to keep her company. After a time she thought she heard footsteps which came from the window, but on opening it she found that the sound was caused by a spray of ivy which was being blown by the wind against the diamond panes.

Of recent years there has been a tendency on the part of the legend-mongers to connect the Black Friar with the skull which Byron made into a drinking-cup, and to put into the Friar's mouth a curse—the curse that Newstead should never pass from father to son. This is a not uncommon curse in connection with monastic buildings which have been turned to secular uses. But there is no authority for its association with Newstead. The property frequently, though by no means invariably, did pass from father to son in the long history of the Byrons, and this part of the legend was evidently imported at a much later date.

But the story of the Newstead succession has been a very remarkable one since Byron's day, and it is little wonder that the legend finds ready believers among the superstitious. Newstead was sold by Byron to Colonel Wildman. The latter's executors sold it to Mr. Webb, the Explorer. His eldest son was drowned, and the second son met a tragic death while he was at Cambridge. The estate was left by Mr. Webb to one of his daughters, Lady Chermside. She died childless and it passed to another sister, Miss Ethel Webb, who died unmarried. She left it to her

sole surviving brother, who died while on active service in East Africa, and Newstead now belongs to Mrs. Fraser, the eldest daughter of Mr. Webb. It is a melancholy recital, and the tradition of ill luck which broods over Newstead received striking confirmation when Sir Arthur Markham, who had taken the Abbey on a lease, died suddenly within a fortnight of the news of the death of the owner in East Africa. It may be added that the famous skull has been reburied, and a few years ago the late Bishop Brindle of Nottingham is said to have conducted a religious service in the Priory ruins with the object of laying to rest all wandering and troubled spirits within the precincts. With what success time may or may not shew. The old exorcist rite has not been over-successful either with ghosts or sceptics. Perhaps, some day, the ill luck which attaches to Newstead will work itself out, but it has certainly been of extraordinary persistence.

Byron quitted Newstead in 1814, just about the time of his luckless engagement to the heiress, Miss Milbanke, which ended in the disastrous marriage of the following year. He never took his bride to see the old place; he never saw it again himself. During the next two or three years, to his intense mortification, continuous efforts were made to sell the estate, and in 1817 it finally passed into the hands of Colonel Wildman, an old schoolfellow of Byron at Harrow. To him, when the purchase was completed, the poet wrote from Venice :—" I trust that Newstead will, being yours, remain so, and that it may see you as happy as I am very sure that you will make your dependants. With regard to myself you may be sure that whether in the fourth, or fifth, or sixth form at Harrow, or in the fluctuations of after life, I shall always remember with regard my old schoolfellow, fellow monitor and friend."

Scores of essays, pamphlets and books have been written on Byron and Newstead. Scores more, doubtless, will continue to be written in the days to come. It is one of those stories which never tire with repetition, so marvellously do the place and the man consort. The Byron pilgrims to Newstead are innumerable. Washington Irving's account of his visit is familiar to all readers of his " Sketch Book," and need not here be quoted. Tom Moore's reference is not so well known. He came to Newstead when gathering material for his biography, and thus jotted down his impressions in his note book :—

"Much struck by the first appearance of the Abbey; would have given worlds to be alone; the faithfulness of the descriptions in 'Don Juan,' the ruined arch, the Virgin and Child, the fountain, etc. Col. Wildman out shooting but was sent for; introduced to Mrs. W. and the ladies in the drawing-room; the ceiling, which is restored, very rich; supposed to be Italian work; Col. Wildman arrived; showed me all over the house; the dining-room which Byron used when he first took possession; the small apartment he afterwards occupied, dinner, sitting and bedroom; some furniture of his in Wildman's study brought from Cambridge: the monument to the dog: his own intention was that he should be buried in a vault at Newstead with his dog and old Murray (?); the little oak before the house planted by himself; a plantation at a distance (beyond the lake?) also planted by himself: picture of 'little Sir John with the great beard.' The panels with the heads new painted and gilt by Wildman; imagines that there was some story connected with them, as in all of them there is the head of a female with a Moor on one side and sometimes a Christian on the other gazing at her."

Newstead passed into very good hands when Colonel Wildman bought it for £100,000. He was at the time a rich man with large inherited West Indian estates; moreover, he was an enthusiastic Byronian, and his desire to restore the Priory as far as possible to its original condition was carried out in good taste. The colonel, who was a Peninsular and Waterloo veteran, had been aide-de-camp to the Duke of Sussex, and in honour of the Duke's visits he built what is still known as the Sussex Tower. But his West Indian property afterwards suffered an enormous fall in value, and at his death Newstead had to be sold. It was then bought, about 1860, by Mr. F. W. Webb, the African explorer, who lived there down to his death in 1899. Mr. Webb was a friend of Dr. Livingstone, who had saved his life by his devoted care during one of his African expeditions, and in 1864-5, while engaged upon his book, "The Zambesi and its Tributaries," Livingstone stayed at Newstead as the guest of the Webbs. The room which he occupied in the Sussex Tower still contains the furniture which he then used and the table at which he wrote. Mrs. Fraser, in the book to which allusion has already been made, has recalled her girlish memories of Dr. Livingstone's visit in some very pleasant pages,

which also give a charming account of family life at Newstead as it was half a century ago. She tells how during a romping game at blind man's buff in the big dining-hall on Christmas Eve, Livingstone dashed his head against a corner of the stone fireplace and cut it so badly that the revels were brought to an abrupt conclusion.

Livingstone and Byron! There could scarcely be a more strongly contrasted pair, and it is strange that they should have been brought together in common association with a place like

Newstead Abbey at the present day.

Newstead. Livingstone, so Mrs. Fraser records, took little interest in the poet, and cared nothing for his poetry. "His character," the explorer curtly observed in his journals, "does not shine. It appears to have been horrid." A true verdict—so far as it goes—but woefully and, indeed, ridiculously incomplete.

The Byron relics in the South Corridor are of great interest, and so are the rooms, said to be part of the Prior's lodgings, which the poet principally used. These include his bedroom, dressing-room, and a small chamber adjoining, which is

reputed to have been haunted by the Goblin Friar. The large drawing-room contains Philips' portrait of Byron, and the dining-hall is a noble apartment. Then, too, there are the famous cloisters, in the centre of which plays the Gothic fountain :—

> Amidst the court, a Gothic fountain played,
> Symmetrical, but decked with carvings quaint—
> Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
> And here perhaps a monster, there a saint :
> The spring gushed through grim mouths of granite made,
> And sparkled into basins, where it spent
> Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
> Like man's vain glory and his vainer troubles.

The chapel, on the eastern side of the cloisters, was the original chapter-house of the Priory, and its groined roof is supported by two columns of clustered and banded shafts. It was set apart by Sir John Byron for family devotions, when he pulled down the great church, and it has been kept for that purpose ever since. In the poet's day it was in a sad state of neglect, but both Colonel Wildman and Mr. Webb took great pains over its restoration. No visitor to Newstead fails to see the oak which Byron planted in 1798, or the monument to Boatswain, Byron's retriever, with the famous inscription to "one who possessed beauty without vanity, strength without insolence, courage without ferocity, and all the virtues of man without his vices." At one time Byron intended that his own body should be buried by the side of his faithful dog, and that his servant Joe Murray should likewise bear them company, but honest Joe objected, and preferred ordinary Christian burial. The terrace, 230 yards in length, and the many gardens at Newstead are among the most beautiful in the county.

CHAPTER XIV

ANNESLEY; HUCKNALL TORKARD; PAPPLEWICK

A LITTLE to the west of Newstead, across a network of railway lines, and in a once beautiful district now subject to the rapid and disfiguring encroachment of collieries, is Annesley. The name is well known to every student of Byron because at Annesley Hall lived Mary Chaworth, one of the poet's earliest and fondest loves:—

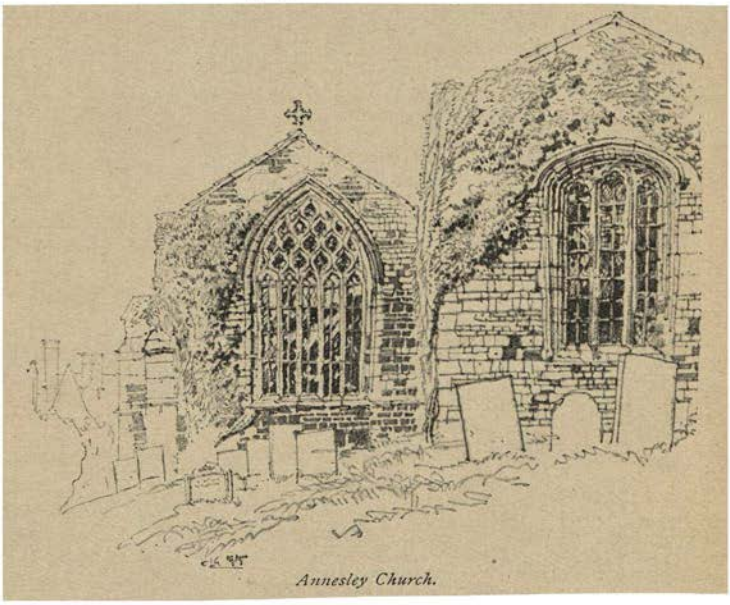
Hills of Annesley, bleak and barren,
Where my thoughtless childhood strayed,
How the northern tempests, warring,
Howl about thy tufted shade!

Now no more, the hours beguiling,
Former favourite haunts I see,
Now no more my Mary smiling
Makes ye seem a heaven to me.

So Byron wrote in 1805, and of the sincerity of his early love for Mary Chaworth, there is not the slightest doubt. *Poseur* as he was, he was genuine enough in that attachment, for he was only a boy and she was his first love. In the school library at Harrow there is preserved a letter from Byron's mother to the headmaster explaining why she was unable to get her son back to school. It was because he was so love-sick that she could do nothing with him. Mary Chaworth, however, who was some years older than Byron, did not treat his romantic attachment seriously, and once deeply wounded his pride by referring to him as "that lame boy." But, then, she was in love with the sporting Mr. Musters. "The next time I see you," Byron said to her one day, "I suppose you will be Mrs. Musters." "I hope so," was the reply, and the hope was realised. The sportsman's eager pursuit—she was a ward in Chancery—was successful.

I saw two beings in the hue of youth:
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there,
Gazing—the one on all that was beneath,
Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her:
And both were fair and one was beautiful:
And both were young, yet not alike in youth.
As the sweet morn in the horizon's verge,
The maid was on the verge of womanhood;
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shining on him.

A charming picture! Byron never forgot it. Supreme egoist, he never ceased to pity himself for the harsh treatment—for



Annesley Church.

so he deemed it—he had received, and there were moments in his later life when he used to indulge in rétrospect and flatter himself that his life would have been altogether different if he had married Mary Chaworth. But it is very doubtful. Byron was not made for domestic happiness.

Love, light as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads its light wings and in a moment flies.

Byron would have been no better, and Mary Chaworth, probably, would have been no happier, if Newstead and Annesley had been united by their marriage.

Mary Chaworth's married life is said to have been unhappy. John Musters, her husband, was the squire of Colwick, near Nottingham, the old pre-Reformation home of the Byrons. Like his father before him, who had been a master of foxhounds for a quarter of a century, "young John" had been brought up to regard fox-hunting as the most serious business of life. Never was an apter pupil, and during the first forty years of the nineteenth century he was one of the best-known sportsmen in England. He was Master of the South Notts for sixteen years, then of the Burton pack, and then had two more periods with the South Notts, with the mastership of the South Wold for three years sandwiched in between. His name appears continually in old volumes of sporting reminiscence, but let it suffice to quote a short passage in which Nimrod sings his praises, and Nimrod's praise was music to the ears of a sportsman of the early Victorian era. It was said of him that he was "the first gentleman who ever wrote for the sporting papers"—in fact, he had many qualms before he could bring himself to contribute to the *Sporting Magazine* in 1822—but no one certainly ever wrote of horses and jockeys and stage-coaches and riders to hounds as did Charles James Apperley. He has had many imitators, but no real rivals. Here, then, is his description of John Musters:—

"Where can I find a better specimen of the British horseman? It is a great treat to see him ride over a country. He does the thing so neatly, so quietly, and yet in so workmanlike a manner that it does one's heart good to behold him. Then see him get a fall! By heavens, he does even that with a grace. He rises from the ground with all the *sang froid* imaginable; first looks at his horse, then at the (I wish I could still say *his*) hounds, and then away with him again. But looking at Mr. Musters now, who could fancy his riding races at Bibury and being described in the Coplow poem as 'Musters the Slim':—

After him plunged Joe Miller, with Musters so slim,
Who twice sank and nearly paid dear for his whim.

"... Mr. Musters is now a master of more than thirty-four years' standing. It must not be forgotten that he was a pupil of Mr. Meynell, as well as of his own father, who kept fox-hounds before him and was a sportsman of a high estate. And what a compliment did Mr. Meynell pay to his pupil in one of the last acts of his sporting career, by making him a present of ten couples of his best old hounds, with which he found good material for his kennel.

"Speaking of Mr. Musters as an individual, no man was ever better qualified by nature for all the duties of a master of hounds. His personal appearance, and elegant manners, could not fail in procuring him respect from all who attended his hounds in the field, and sportsmen could not but be delighted with the practical science he displayed. No man ever yet born has been so universally allowed to attach hounds to himself and obtain command over them in so short a time, and the well-known story of his pack breaking away at the sight of him, as he was crossing the country on his road to a dinner party, is a striking instance of this extraordinary faculty on his part. ... He was, as I have already said, cradled in a kennel, having actually performed the part of amateur whipper-in to his father, who hunted parts of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire for at least fifteen years; and when he sold his pack to the late Sir Harry Harpur, the celebrated Shaw, who hunted them, was heard to say that Mr. Musters—or rather Mr. John Musters as he was then called—was often of more use to him, when a difficulty occurred, than both his whippers-in. In fact, he was as regularly educated for hunting hounds as a churchman is for the church, and has given the lie to the generally correct assertion that no gentleman can ever make a truly good huntsman."

Perhaps the hunting squire devoted himself too exclusively to his horses and his hounds and his brother sportsmen. Anyway, legend says that Mrs. Musters was unhappy. Her untimely death in 1831 was due to a mob of rioters from Nottingham who, after burning the castle, marched out to Colwick and attacked the Hall. The squire was away, and only Mrs. Musters and her young son and daughter were at home, when the frightened servants came in to report that the rioters were tearing up the iron railings. The ladies fled from the drawing-room to the ball room and out into the shrubbery where they hid. They got wet through with the heavy rain, and had to

sleep in the stables. The mob wrecked nearly everything in the house, and started incendiary fires, but these were successfully put out on their hurried departure. From the shock and exposure to the cold and wet Mrs. Musters never recovered, and died a few months afterwards in her forty-seventh year. Such was the sad end of Byron's Mary. Colwick Hall, it may be mentioned, which was rebuilt in 1776, and contains some fine apartments and noble Adam fireplaces, now serves as hotel, restaurant, and refreshment place for the Colwick race-course which has been formed out of the old park. The two present residences of the Chaworth-Musters family are Annesley and Wiverton.

The Chaworths were one of the most ancient families in the county, for they had been settled in Nottinghamshire since the Conquest. Not only that, but in Plantagenet days they formed matrimonial alliances with members of the blood royal. A Maud Chaworth—of course, she was a great heiress—married the Earl of Lancaster, son of Edward Crookback, and grandson of Henry III. She was the mother of Henry, Earl of Derby, who was created Duke of Lancaster, and he in turn was father of Lady Blanche, who married John of Gaunt, and was mother of Henry IV. These, it is true, are very dim and faded glories, but they show the antiquity of the old feudal house of Chaworth, or Cadurcis, which seems to have been the original name. Later on, another branch of the family rose to distinction when Sir George Chaworth, Knt., of Cropwell Butler, was created in 1627 Viscount Chaworth of Trim, Co. Meath. This was the Chaworth who held Wiverton Hall for the King during the Civil War, though by that time Annesley was their principal estate. The title became extinct in 1699. We saw these titled Chaworths keeping their lonely state in Langar Church, but an interesting relic of one of them remains at Annesley Hall, where on a black marble mantel the inscription may be read :—

Juliana de la Fountaine
Is worth more than a gold mountain,
The name above
Is her you love. Chaworth.

A second posy runs :—

Alas ! I find my poore heart will prove,
Too small a vessel for o'erflowing love,
Which makes me wish thine eyes so bright had never shined,
Or that thou had'st been from thy cradle blind. Poor Chaworth !

These love-sick effusions are dated Christmas Day, 1699.

The most dramatic and tragic event in the family history, the celebrated duel between William Chaworth and his cousin, the fifth Lord Byron, is well known. A little party of ten Nottinghamshire gentlemen had assembled to dine together, as was their weekly custom, at the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, on January 26, 1765. The hour of dining was 4.15 p.m. and at 7 the bill was sent up with a final bottle of claret. At that moment the conversation had turned on game and Chaworth was boasting that there was not a hare in his part of the county except those preserved by himself or Sir Charles Sedley. Byron challenged the assertion and offered to bet £100 that he had more game on his manors than Chaworth had on his. Chaworth accepted the bet and called for pen, ink, and paper to make a note of it. A little later, Sir Charles Sedley's manors were again alluded to by Chaworth, and Byron asked which they were. Chaworth told him with some heat and added, "If your lordship wants any further conversation about his manors, Sir Charles Sedley lives in Dean Street, and your lordship knows where to find me in Berkeley Row." Then the conversation took another turn and apparently none of the company thought that the altercation would be carried further.

A little later Chaworth went out of the room and Byron followed. "Sir, I want to speak to you," said the latter, and together they went down one flight of stairs. A waiter came at their call, and in reply to Byron's question whether either of the two rooms on that landing was empty, he opened the door of one and went in, setting a lighted tallow candle on the table. There was a fire in the grate, but it was low and gave little additional light. Byron and Chaworth entered, and the door was shut by Chaworth, just as Byron asked him whether he was to have recourse to Sir Charles Sedley or to him to account for the business of the game. "To me," said Chaworth, and then, as he turned from the door, he heard Byron say "Draw," and saw him with his sword nearly drawn. Chaworth drew as quickly as he could and made the first thrust. His rapier pierced Byron's waistcoat and inflicted a slight flesh wound, while Byron, feeling the point against his ribs, shortened his own sword and ran Chaworth through the body, the point coming out at the back. "By God!" exclaimed Byron, "I have as much courage as any man in England."

The bell was rung by one or other of the combatants, and the waiter, rushing in, found Byron with his left hand round Chaworth's waist and Chaworth's right hand leaning on Byron's shoulder. The inn-keeper was hurriedly summoned and took away the swords. Dr. Caesar Hawkins, the surgeon, was sent for, and pronounced the wound mortal. Chaworth died at 9 the next morning, after a night of great agony. But he had been fully conscious and able to make his will and give his version of what had taken place to his uncle Levinz. The latter said that when he asked his nephew, "Was this fair, Billy?" as he described how Byron had drawn while he was closing the door, Chaworth had not replied. So there was clearly some colour for the theory that Byron had taken his cousin at a disadvantage, and he was arrested on a charge of murder and placed on his trial in the House of Lords, with the Lord Chancellor as President of the Court. Byron's account differed materially from that of Chaworth. He said that the latter made two thrusts at him which he successfully parried, and that when the fatal wound was administered both thrust at the same time. The probabilities are that the duel was about as fair as any duel taking place in such confused and irregular circumstances could possibly be. The wrath of both, which had somewhat subsided before they rose from the table, had flared up again on the stairs when they found themselves alone, and the empty room and absence of other company provoked the fatal encounter. Four Peers only, Lords Beaulieu, Falmouth, Orford, and Le Despencer, gave their verdict "Not guilty." All the rest said, "Not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter"—a judgment which plainly showed that they held Byron severely to blame. But the verdict carried no punishment, for Byron claimed benefit of clergy under an ancient statute of Edward the Sixth, and he was discharged on payment of the fees. The sword of the unfortunate Chaworth was taken home after the duel by Mr. Sherwin, who had been a member of the party, and one of his descendants presented it to the father of the present owner of Annesley on his coming of age in 1859.

Annesley Hall—a fine old house with stately terrace and picturesque lake in the midst of a well-timbered deer park—is not shewn to the public. Close by is the church of All Saints, now disused. Its small aisle was built as a chantry chapel and bears the name of Felley Chapel, from a small priory of

Black Canons which stood a mile to the south-west. Felley was the home in Stuart times of the Millingtons, one of whom, Gilbert, was a regicide. The tower arch in Annesley Church, walled up in 1686, is decorated in plaster with the arms of the Chaworths. The east window and the triple sedilia are also worth notice. An interesting brass of William Breton, shewing a forest hunter armed with bow, arrows and knife, and followed by his dog, was removed of recent years into private keeping.

A little to the south of Annesley is the township of Hucknall Torkard, a dreary mining town of depressing ugliness, interesting only by reason of its church, which is the burial place of Byron. But very little of the plain village church, as Byron knew it, remains. It has been greatly enlarged, and is now, thanks to a magnificent series of modern stained glass windows, one of the most beautiful churches in the county. These were all the gift of the late Canon Godber, a native of Hucknall. The Byron vault is in the chancel, and the marble floor tablet was the gift of the late King of Greece. On the walls are memorials to Richard Lord Byron (d. 1679) and to the poet's daughter, Augusta Ada, Lady Lovelace (d. 1852).

> The child of love, though born in bitterness,
> And nurtured in convulsion.

Above the memorial tablet of the poet himself is a portrait medallion, bearing the inscription, "The Pilgrim of Eternity." Byron was buried on July 16, 1824, and his old friend Hobhouse, who came down from London for the occasion and stayed overnight with Lord Rancliffe, at Bunny, thus described the scene in his "Diary":—

"*July* 16.—Went with Lord Rancliffe to Nottingham. The town was crowded in every street leading to the inn (*i.e.*, the Blackmoor's Head) in which the coffin lay, and much feeling and sympathy were exhibited by all classes. Hodgson, translator of 'Juvenal,' afterwards Provost of Eton, whom Byron had much befriended, and Colonel Wildman, owner of Newstead, attended as mourners. The Mayor and Corporation of Nottingham joined the funeral procession. It extended about a quarter of a mile, and moving very slowly, was five hours on the road to Hucknall. The view of it as it wound through the villages of Papplewick and Lindley (Linby) excited sensations in me which will never be forgotten. As we passed under the hill of Annesley, 'crowned with the peculiar diadem of trees'

immortalised by Byron, I called to mind a thousand particulars of my first visit to Newstead. It was dining at Annesley Park that I saw the first interview of Byron, after a long interval, with his early love, Mary Anne Chaworth.

"The churchyard and the little church of Hucknall were so crowded that it was with difficulty we could follow the coffin up the aisle. The contrast between the gorgeous decorations of the coffin and the urn and the humble village church was very striking. I was told afterwards that the place was crowded until a late hour in the evening, and that the vault was not closed till the next morning."

Outside in the churchyard lies another celebrity whose name once flew busily through the mouths of men. This was Ben Caunt, one of the gamest and most sportsmanlike boxers who ever wore the belt of the champion of England. Hucknall was his native place in 1815, and he died in 1861. A fine, powerful man at his prime, he was 6 feet 2 inches in height, and weighed over fourteen stone. His greatest fights were with the famous Bendigo of Nottingham. Bendigo was four years the older, and they met thrice in serious combat. At the first encounter, in 1835, Bendigo beat Caunt in twenty-two rounds. Then when Bendigo had won the Championship by defeating Bill Looney in ninety-nine rounds, after a fight lasting an hour and three-quarters, they met again in 1838 on Skipwith Common, near Selby, and Caunt was declared the winner after seventy-six rounds. But Bendigo was never satisfied with the verdict—he said that he fell accidentally in the last round without striking a blow—and so a third encounter was arranged in 1845 for £200 and the Championship Belt. This time, after a terrific battle of ninety-three rounds, lasting 130 minutes, the judge gave the decision in favour of Bendigo. Caunt finished his career as a publican—the usual goal of the profession. Bendigo, after his prize-fighting days were over, "took to drinking very heavy until I was nearly mad." But he was, happily for himself, soundly converted by "Mr. Weaver, the Converted Collier," and from that day forward to his death in 1880 "Bendy" was a popular Revivalist, a brand plucked from the burning. Bendigo's real name was William Thompson, and as a young man he had been an all-round athlete, ready at any time to back himself for a wager against all comers at such miscellaneous accomplishments as lobbing a stone, throwing

a cricket ball, turning a somersault, or catching fish. Let it also be recorded of him that he once threw half a brick across the Trent near Trent Bridge with his left hand, a distance of seventy yards! It was a quite useless feat, but the thrill of accomplishment must have been exquisite. Bendigo was also once matched to throw a cricket ball and play cricket against George Parr, but the match fell through, so Bendigo explained, "on account of me being seized with the gout."

The old prize-fighters of the early nineteenth century were a tough lot. Now "big money" has ruined the sport, and though there has been a boxing revival in recent years, the ring has lost its finest qualities. Listen to the enthusiasm of an old sportsman, Mr. Peter Corcoran, of Gray's Inn, as he describes the rapture of watching the preliminaries of a fight:—

Oh! it *is* life! to see a proud
And dauntless man step, full of hopes,
Up to the P.C. stakes and ropes,
Throw in his hat and with a spring
Get gallantly within the ring;
Eye the wide crowd and walk awhile
Taking all cheerings with a smile:
To see him strip—his well trained form
White, glowing, muscular and warm,
All beautiful in conscious power,
Relaxed and quiet till the hour;
His glossy and transparent frame
In radiant plight to strive for fame!
To look upon the clean shaped limb
In silk and flannel clothed trim:
While round the waist the kerchief tied
Makes the flesh glow in richer pride.
'Tis more than Life, to watch him hold
His hand forth, tremulous yet bold,
Over his second's, and to clasp
His rival's in a quiet grasp:
To watch the noble attitude
He takes—the crowd in breathless mood—
And then to see with adamant start
The muscles set—and the great heart
Hurl a courageous splendid light
Into the eye, and then—The Fight.

No county in England produced more famous boxers than Notts. We will only mention one more, John Shaw, the Lifeguardsman, whose glorious death at Waterloo, where he is said to have slain ten Frenchmen with his own right hand, was immortalised by Sir Walter Scott.

Nor 'mongst her humbler sons shall Shaw e'er die,
Immortal deeds defy mortality.

Shaw was the son of a farmer near Wollaton. While he was a boy, he happened to be fighting with a man three stone heavier than himself, when James Belcher, who was passing by, gave him a few words of advice. Shaw joined the Lifeguards in 1807, and boxed at the old Fives Court. He only made two appearances in the prize ring, and his second easy victory on Hounslow Heath led him to issue a challenge to All England. That was in April, 1815. But the sterner field of Waterloo intervened and Shaw fought his last fight in that stupendous arena. He fell badly wounded during the battle, and received further wounds from the lances of the French Light Cavalry, while he lay on the ground. A soldier of the 73rd gave him a draught of water, and he is said to have lingered on till the 19th, or four days after the fight, before death released him from his sufferings.

Papplewick, which lies on the southern boundary of the Newstead estate, has a hall and park belonging to the Montagus, though it is long since that family resided there. The best known Montagu, in Papplewick annals, was the Hon. Frederick, who was one of the Commissioners of the Treasury when Fox and North formed their famous, or rather notorious, Coalition in 1783. He was a great planter of trees and a patron of the Muses, and among his friends was William Mason, an intimate associate of Gray, and himself a poet much admired by his own generation. It was at Papplewick that Mason composed part of his poem, "The English Garden," in the Third Book of which, towards the end, occur the following lines:—

Turn to this clear rill
Which, while I bid your bold ambition cease,
Runs murmuring at my side. O'er many a rood
Your skill may lead the wanderer; many a mound
Of pebbles raise, to fret her in her course
Impatient; louder then will be her song;
For she will 'plain and gurgle, as she goes,
As does the widowed ring-dove. Take, vain Pomp,
Thy lakes, thy long canals, thy trim cascades,
Beyond them all true taste will dearly prize
This little dimpling treasure. Mark the cleft
Through which she bursts to-day. Behind that rock
A Naiad dwells: Ligea is her name;
And she has sisters in contiguous cells,
Who never saw the sun.

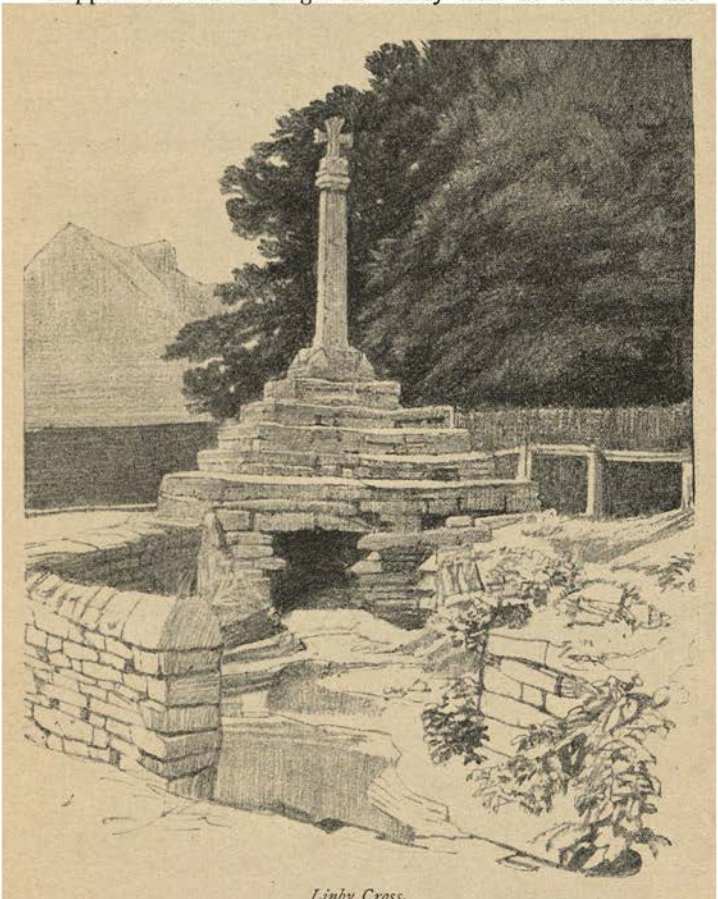
This is poor stuff, but the stream which Mason prettily describes as a "little dimpling treasure," is the River Leen, and the poet states in a note that he changed the nymph's name Linæa to Ligea, "because his pen did not admit of particular panegyric." As if it mattered a straw what his pen admitted and what refused. It is all dead. But the "cleft" remains, and it is much visited by thirsty golfers half way round the course on the Hollinwell links, which yield the players delightful glimpses alike of Newstead and Papplewick. Montagu died—"greatly lamented"—in 1800, and his marble table tomb, sup-

Papplewick.

ported on eight slender pillars, may be seen close to the church which he had himself rebuilt, with the exception of the ancient tower, in 1795. Papplewick churchyard is most charmingly situated on the edge of the Hall grounds, but the fabric itself is as plain and heavy as the adjoining mansion. Its most interesting features are the inscribed slabs built into the porch which rudely commemorate some of the old forest occupations. One shows a rough bellows beneath a cross, indicating that it marked the grave of an ironworker who had worked with his forge in a clearing of the forest. Another shows the bow of a forester, and a third the knife of a woodward. The small figure over the south door represents St. James with his pilgrim's staff. The Hall is one of the least successful

examples of the houses of the brothers Adam, and it has recently been shorn of its fine marble mantelpieces.

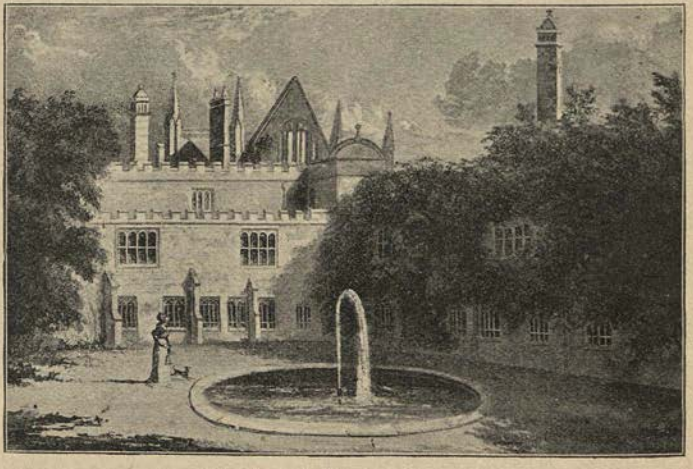
Papplewick and its neighbour Linby were at one time the



Linby Cross.

centres of a considerable cotton industry, and several flourishing cotton mills along the Leen side were worked by water power.

That is the explanation of the large lake-like sheet of water below the church. For half a century the industry flourished, but it received its death blow from the opening of the railways in Lancashire, and the supersession of water power by steam power. About 1840, the mills ceased working, with the result that a large number of persons were thrown out of employment, and the burden of the poor rate became so heavy that the owners of Papplewick and Linby prohibited all further manufacturing on their estates.



The Fountain Court at Newstead.

CHAPTER XV

THE FOREST OF SHERWOOD

THE ancient Forest of Sherwood covered a large irregular tract of country some twenty-five miles long by ten broad. The popular impression of a forest is of a dense woodland extending for mile after mile. That, however, was never true of Sherwood. There were, of course, many stretches of thick wood, like those still remaining in Birkland and Bilhalgh, but the word forest must be understood as comprising the whole tract within certain clearly defined boundaries—woodland, heath, waste ground and even pasture being included. All this district belonged originally to the Crown, and was strictly subject to special Forest laws, administered on the one hand by Crown officers, who held periodical Courts, and on the other by local officers sitting in local courts. Sherwood Forest was divided into separate bailiwicks or wards, each of which was supposed to hold a local court every 42 days, at Linby, Calverton, Mansfield, and Edwinstowe, while the great Courts or Forest Eyres were in theory held once in seven years, though as a matter of fact the intervals grew longer and longer. Every three years came an Inspection or Regard, to see whether the boundaries were being encroached upon, but this rule also became more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The true swainmotes, or assemblies of free forest tenants, were held three times a year.

Naturally, there grew up a number of small hamlets scattered over this wide forest area, and a certain amount of land in their neighbourhood was laid down for tillage and pasture. The rest was open and common to the sheep and cattle of the villagers and to the King's deer. If a village desired to take up a " break " or temporary enclosure, it could do so by permission of the lord of the manor, and might keep it enclosed for five or six years,

but the official verderers were required to report to the Lord Chief Justice in Eyre that such enclosure was not to the prejudice either of King or subject. In addition to the hamlets were the abbeys and priories of Welbeck, Rufford, Worksop, and Newstead, communities of monks possessed of granges and mills, but these had no more privileges in the Forest proper than had the humblest villagers. Such then was the Forest of wood and waste, whose boundary on the south was the Trent from Gunthorpe to Trent Bridge and Wilford; the course of the Leen on the west to Mansfield and Warsop; the course of the Meden to the King's Ford near Bothamsall on the north; and on the east a line from the King's Ford through Wellow to Salterford, and down the Doverbeck to the Trent. The boundaries were perambulated from time to time, and they were liable to change, but roughly speaking they remained fairly constant, and with the exception of the district near Lenton and a few other places around Nottingham and the more important villages, the general character of the Forest altered comparatively little down to the early part of the eighteenth century.

Then the great change took place. Major Rooke, writing in 1799, recorded that his friend Doctor Wylde, of Southwell, told him that he had often heard his father, who died in 1780, in his 83rd year, say that he well remembered "one continuous wood from Mansfield to Nottingham." "Since that time," added the Major, "the Forest had been pretty much cleared: the woods that remain are Birkland, Bilhalgh, some scattered trees called Mansfield Wood, part of Harlow Wood, and Sansan Wood." All the Forest north of Worksop was disafforested before the 1609 Survey. The forest roads, even the main roads, were loose sandy tracts where progress of three miles an hour was considered good. As late as 1755, the Mansfield and Worksop road was described as "a deep sandy road through which the horses moved with the agility of tortoises, in a desert overgrown with heath and fern."

The deer were found to be a great pest by the farmers whose lands came close up to the forest. For they got in among the crops and trampled them, and fed upon the young corn, but anyone who killed a deer was subject to severe penalties, though by no means so severe, it is to be noted, as those which awaited the sheep-stealer. Even so late as 1708 we find a meeting of "Notts gentry" taking place at Retford and drawing

up a petition to the House of Commons, in which they say, "If we have not the limits of the forest ascertained, we shall have such a clog and burden upon our estates that our posterity will never be able to shake off." The petitioners explained that until lately the deer in the forest had not been more than 300, but were now treble that number, that the animals were enticed to leave the forest where the food was scanty and became accustomed to the fields, that the cost of keeping watchmen was ruinous, and that they would be "disabled to support themselves and their families and to pay their taxes." This last seems rather an over-statement on the part of the four hundred "Notts gentry," but that is the way with petitions. The Law Officers curtly replied that the complainants had taken the land "subject to the encumbrance," and therefore had no just cause of complaint. If the deer got into their fields, it was the business of the petitioners to turn them out again.

The eighteenth century saw the close of the long connection between the Crown and Sherwood Forest. On the one hand, the rights of the Crown had been allowed to fall into desuetude by continual neglect; on the other, the neighbouring owners began a series of steady encroachments and "sinned boldly" when there was no one to stop them. Moreover, in the second half of the century a regular fever for enclosure set in, and this soon brought about the end of the old Sherwood Forest, as it had been known to many generations. The Enclosure Acts provided for the enclosure of all the open waste lands in which the Crown had had the right from time immemorial to keep deer and exercise the right of chase. Parliament estimated Crown rights at a fortieth part of the land enclosed, so whenever an Enclosure Act was passed a certain share was allotted to the king, and this was usually sold to the highest bidder. Other and larger portions were assigned to the holders of Forest offices which had long since become purely nominal and complimentary. For example, Queen Elizabeth had appointed Sir John Stanhope and his heirs Rangers or Keepers of Thorneywood Chase. When the Arnold Enclosure Act was passed in 1791, the Earl of Chesterfield, as descendant of the said Sir John Stanhope, received a twentieth part of the land within the limits of the old chase, in compensation for forest rights, which were wholly obsolete. And so with all the rest. The Crown received its allotted portions and sold at the market

price. By 1799 the only part of the forest remaining to the Crown consisted of the Hays of Birkland and Bilhalgh, and the last link was severed in 1806 when the Duke of Portland exchanged his advowson of Marylebone Parish Church for the rights of the Crown in the Forest of Birkland. Subsequently the Duke effected an exchange of this property with Earl Manvers, to whose estate it now belongs.

A word may be allowed in this place as to the results of these Enclosure Acts. It is the fashion of the moment in certain political circles to ascribe to the enclosures of the latter half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries the landless condition of the English peasant and all the worst features of his lot. But, like all sweeping judgments, this is only partly true. No one can deny that many of the enclosures were scandalously and even outrageously carried out, in a manner grossly injurious to the interests of the poor, who were tempted to part with their share for cash payments, too often promptly wasted at the ale-house. But the evidence as to the immediate benefits of enclosure to agriculture generally is overwhelming. Robert Lowe of Oxton, a most competent observer, writing in 1794, said: "The value of lands has been everywhere raised by enclosure in a greater or less degree, in some very greatly. As to its effect on population, it is apparent that there has been a great increase of it in the Forest Enclosures, which afford much more employment than in their former state; nor is there any appearance of depopulation in the Clays, as a part has always been kept in tillage under an improved culture." The agricultural experts who were sent down to report to Government on the state of the waste unenclosed lands were absolutely unanimous in denouncing their condition as a disgrace to the country. One said that the land "looked as if it belonged to Cherokees." The cottars were described as thieves and heathens, living free but in a state of degradation, and when, as in Nottinghamshire, spacious wastes co-existed by the side of the common field system the results were deplorable, for the latter led to slovenly farming and was incredibly wasteful of labour. Enlightened expert opinion was, in fact, enthusiastically in favour of enclosure. Arthur Young, for example, writing in 1769 of the unenclosed lands near Barnby Moor, said "What a scandal that they remain in their present condition! They would let, if enclosed, at 3*s*. 6*d*. to 4*s*. an

acre without further improvement, and, if improved, at 10s. an acre."

And yet candour must admit that the result of the change was disastrous to the status of the poor. "In most of the enclosures," wrote a contemporary, "the poor man's allotment and cow are sold five times out of six before the award is made." The principle was right, but it was carried out in a greedy, grasping spirit of scramble, in which the poor man was bound to lose, and lose he did. Agriculture took a great stride forward, but it was at the expense of the class which could least afford to pay.

The poor at enclosing do grudge
  Because of abuses that fall,
Lest some men should have but too much,
  And some again nothing at all.
If order might therein be found
  What were to the general ground!

For commons these commoners cry,
  Enclosing they may not abide;
Yet some be not able to buy
  A cow with a calf at her side:
Nor lay not to live by their work,
  But thievishly loiter and lurk.

So Tusser had written in Queen Elizabeth's day. The system of common land cultivation could only be cured by enclosure; the system of commons called for regulation rather than abolition. Parliament never made a more cruel blunder than when it divided up the commons and waste lands of England so thoughtlessly—at best—and so selfishly, at worst. There is a striking passage in Arthur Young's "Enquiry into Wastes," in which he depicts the hopeless slough of despond into which a large section of the labouring population soon sank. "Go," said he, "to an ale-house kitchen and there you shall see the origin of poverty and the poor rates. For whom are they to be sober? For whom are they to save? (such are their questions). 'For the parish? If I am diligent, shall I have leave to build a cottage? If I am sober, shall I have land for a cow? If I am frugal, shall I have half an acre of potatoes? You offer no motives. You have nothing but a parish officer and a workhouse. Bring me another pot.'"

Side by side with the enclosures at the end of the eighteenth cen-

tury a good deal of planting went on for ornamental purposes. Sir George Savile, for example, planted a thousand acres at Rufford, and the Marquis of Titchfield, the second Duke of Kingston, Viscount Newark and the Hon. F. Montagu, at Papplewick, were all enthusiastic planters of trees. Many of their plantations still bear the names of naval victories and triumphant English Admirals, which explain the presence on the Ordnance Map of such names as Nelson, St. Vincent's, Warren, Duncan, and Howe. Surely an excellent way of celebrating a day of national rejoicing. "Good news of the Fleet!" they said. "Thank God! I'll plant a grove." It provided labour; it benefited their descendants; it beautified their estates.

The rights of the Crown within the Forest in the old days had been two-fold—rights of vert and rights of venison, or, in other words, rights of timber and hunting. The jealous care with which the former were reserved may be gathered from the rules laid down at the Eyre held in Nottingham in 1287 by Sir William de Vesey. It was then decreed that anyone caught felling a green oak should be "attached for the next attachment courts" (*i.e.*, summoned to appear at the next local swainmote), there to find pledges or surety till the next Eyre, which was the Court presided over by a Justice appointed by the King. He had also to pay the price of the tree to the Verderers. A second offence was similarly punished, but for a third the offender was to be imprisoned at Nottingham till delivered by the King or Justice of the Eyre, and this might entail detention for many years. Such was the penalty for those dwelling in the forest. Any person living outside who committed the like offence was to be committed to gaol, and the third time was to lose his horses and cart, or oxen and wagon, or their price. Those caught cutting saplings, branches or dry wood from oaks, hazels, thorns, limes, alders, or hollies, had to find surety to appear at the next attachment court, if the sapling were worth less than 4*d.*; if it were worth more, they were to be attached until the next Eyre. These rules were all directed against unauthorised interference with the timber; in 1543 an Act was passed in the interest of good forestry, prescribing how many years a plantation was to remain enclosed after cutting, according to the number of years' growth of the timber cut. There was also a fine of 6*s.* 8*d.* per tree for all trees cut on common lands, and in Queen Elizabeth's time an Act was passed for the whipping of persons who cut under-

wood, if they could not pay the fine. In the records of the Forest continual reference is made to petitions from monasteries, churches, and noblemen for the Crown's gracious permission to cut a tree for the repair of hall, ceiling, or bridge, and allusions are common to the requisition of oaks for the Navy. One of the perquisites of the Four Verderers of Sherwood at the close of the eighteenth century was the right to an oak every year out of the King's Hays of Birkland and Bilhalgh.

The Crown's rights of venison were similarly guarded. The theory was that the big game belonged to the King alone, and if anyone else hunted in the Forest it was by favour. Thus, by the rules of Sir William de Vesey, it was forbidden to "carry bows or arrows in the forest, outside the King's highway," and on the highway only in accordance with the assize of the forest. No stranger was supposed to be in the forest at all during the night—the presumption in such case being that he was a poacher—and the use of carts was forbidden during the "fence month," *i.e.*, the *mensis vetitus*, or forbidden month, from the fifteenth day before Midsummer Day to the fifteenth after it, when the deer were dropping their fawns. On the other hand, if an Archbishop, or Bishop, or Earl, or Baron, were journeying to the King at the Royal command, he was privileged to enliven his journey with a little hunting, and might take and kill one or two of the King's deer. Nevertheless, despite all rules and penalties, poaching was not uncommon. Here, for example, is a venison presentment taken from the Nottingham Forest pleas for the year 1334:—

"It is presented and proved that Hugh of Wotehall of Woodborough, William Hyend, Wilcock, formerly the servant of the Parson of Clifton, and Stephen Fleming of Nottingham, on 13 June, 1325, were in the wood of Arnold, in the place which is called Throwys, with bows and arrows. And they shot a hart so that it died. And its flesh was found putrid and devoured by vermin in a place which is called Thweycehilli, and the arrow was found in the said hart, wherewith it was shot. And the aforesaid Hugh came before the justices and is sent to prison. And the aforesaid William and Wilcock are not found. Nor have they anything whereby, etc.; therefore let them be exacted. And the aforesaid Stephen Fleming is dead: therefore nothing of him. And afterwards the aforesaid Hugh is brought out of prison and is pardoned because he is poor. And

the aforesaid William and Wilcock were exacted in the county and did not appear; therefore they are outlawed."

It will be observed that this trial took place nine years after the act of poaching was committed, and that in the interval one of the defendants had died, two had slipped away and could not be found, while the fourth was pardoned on the score of poverty. There must have been manifest inconveniences in administering justice on those lines.

There were two regular hunting seasons. One, lasting from June 24 to September 14, was the season of *Pinguedo*, so called because the hart and buck were said to be "in grease." The other season was called *Fermisona*, and was devoted to hunting the hind and the doe. This lasted from November 11 to February 2. Some of the old forest names are of curious interest. A berner, for example, was a keeper in charge of running hounds, a fewterer (*veltrarius*) looked after the greyhounds, and a bercelleter kept the bercelets, another species of hound. The agisters were the forest officers who collected the money from the villagers for agistments, *i.e.*, the feeding of cattle or pigs in the forest; an enclosure of waste land was called an assart, and the frequent offence of purpresture consisted of encroachment upon the forest boundary by the building of houses or sheds.

At one time the great office of Keeper of the Forest was hereditary, but that came to an end in 1287, and afterwards it was conferred by the King at pleasure. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Lord Warden, as he was then styled, was the Duke of Newcastle, appointed during pleasure by letters patent, and he in turn appointed during pleasure the subordinate dignitary of Bow-bearer and Ranger. That office was held by Lord Byron, and there were four Gentlemen Verderers, Sir F. Molyneux, J. Litchfield, E. T. Gould, and W. Sherbrooke. The site of the Ranger's House for Bilhalgh and Birkland was at Cockglode, in a corner of the forest near Ollerton, where the present house was built by Dr. Aldrich in 1774. Its best known occupant in recent times was Mr. Cecil Foljambe, who was a local Member of Parliament for many years, and was created Lord Hawkesbury in 1893.

Sherwood possesses several trees of individual fame. The best known of these and the one best deserving its celebrity is the Major Oak, in Birklands, near Edwinstowe. This is a

magnificent veteran which, though it lost its crown in a storm some thirty years ago, is still shapely to the eye, and bears its burden of years with dignity and vigour. Its trunk is thirty feet round, five feet from the ground, and the circumference of its branches is 270 yards. What the actual tale of its years may be no one seems to know. The aged keeper, who mounts guard to protect it from the troops of summer sightseers, gives its age as fourteen hundred years, and with a little persuasion might doubtless be induced to double it. But if he halved it he would probably be nearer the mark. The giant branches are bound in iron fetters for their mutual support. The trunk

The Major Oak.

is hollow and, as usual with hollow trees, it is a point of honour with most visitors to crowd inside, but these are untoward familiarities with dignified age. How the Major Oak came by its name is doubtful. The usual explanation is that Major Oak is a corruption of the name of Major Rooke, who wrote a book on the Oaks of Welbeck in 1790, and is said to have had a special fondness for this tree. But this is a highly suspicious derivation. The real name of the tree, according to the Thoresby tradition, is the Queen Oak, and such was its name on the estate until comparatively recently. But Major Oak it is now, and will be till it falls. Not far away are the shivering remains of another old oak, called Robin Hood's Larder.

Mention will be made later of the Greendale Oak in Welbeck Park, and this, when Major Rooke wrote, had a companion tree not far distant called the Seven Sisters, from its seven perpendicular trunks. Then there was the Duke's Walking Stick, a tall tree, 111 feet 6 inches in height, and on the north side of Welbeck Park were two oaks, one ninety-eight feet and its fellow eighty-eight feet, with a gate between them, which were called The Porters. These, however, have gone, and the so-called Parliament Oak, near Clipstone, on the road from Ollerton to Mansfield, is nearly gone, too. Tradition says that King John or Edward I. held a Parliament of his Barons under this oak, but he is much more likely to have called his Council together in the Royal Hunting Lodge just by.

While we are dealing with Sherwood Forest something must be said of Robin Hood, but the reference shall be brief. Was there ever such person in the flesh? It seems treason to harbour a doubt anywhere near the forest which is so full of his glory, but the question has been asked and, indeed, a whole literature has been written in reply. There is abundant ground for scepticism. Most of the exploits of Robin Hood and his friends are told in other districts of other similar heroes and outlaws. The name itself is found in many widely separated parts of England, and usually in association with old trees and caves. The most fantastic identifications have been essayed. According to some, he was the leader of a troop of Saxon bandits. Others insist on creating him Earl of Huntingdon; others say he was a porter at Nottingham Castle. Some place his birth at Loxley near Sheffield, and his tomb at Kirklees. It is not a little suspicious to find that at a very early date "a tale of Robin Hood" had become a synonym for a wild, improbable story of a romantic turn. And yet mythical tales can grow up just as easily round the career of a real, as of an imaginary, adventurer, and Robin Hood was the hero of so many popular ballads that it is hard to believe there never was a popular outlaw who lived free in Sherwood Forest in the days of King Richard and King John. The earliest mention of his name in English poetry is in the "Vision of Piers Plowman," where Sloth says:—

> I can noughte perfitly my Paternoster, as the prest it syngeth;
> But I can rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolfe Erle of Chestre.

That passage shows that in 1377, when Langland wrote, Robin

Hood was already a thoroughly familiar name. But, after all, what matters it whether Robin Hood had an historical existence or no, and whether Friar Tuck and Maid Marian actually lived with him in the glades of Sherwood? He is alive in the popular imagination, just as Jacques and his friends of the Forest of Arden are alive, and it is always high summer in the Forest when Robin is in the woods, and if ever he takes a purse it is from some one who can well afford to lose it—a dangerous doctrine of mediæval Socialism much revived in these days—and if he benefits himself he is always scrupulous to share his plunder with the poor.

> From wealthy abbot's chests and churches' abundant store,
> What oftentimes he took he shared among the poor;
> No lordly Bishop in lusty Robin's way,
> To him, before he went, but for his pass must pay,
> The widows in distress he graciously relieved,
> And remedied the wrongs of many a virgin grieved.

No doubt this character of Robin Hood as the protector of the oppressed and the generous friend of the poor was the secret of his extraordinary popularity in the ballads of the simple folk. His broad rustic humour appealed to them, and his love of sport and the open air life of the woods, together with his spirit of revolt against the authority of law and church. But they loved him most because, at a time when the common people counted for little or nothing in the social order, he "considered the poor." There is no need to recount the fabulous exploits associated with his name; they are known to everyone. Let me rather quote a few lines from the delightful poem in which Keats lamented that the spirit of the old greenwood days was dead:—

> No, the bugle sounds no more,
> And the twanging bow no more,
> Silent is the ivory shrill
> Past the heath and up the hill,
> There is no mid-forest laugh
> Where lone echo gives the half
> To some wight, amazed to hear
> Jesting, deep in forest drear.
> . . . . . .
> So it is, yet let us sing
> Honour to the old bow-string!
> Honour to the bugle-horn!
> Honour to the woods unshorn!

Honour to the Lincoln green !
Honour to the archer keen !
Honour to tight Little John
And the horse he rode upon !
Honour to bold Robin Hood
Sleeping in the underwood !
Honour to maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan !

The charms of the Forest of Sherwood still await their true and inspired interpreter. To say that is not to disparage the merit of many a writer who has sincerely felt its beauty and striven to set down his feelings on the printed page. Many an agreeable chapter has been written in the vein of mingled description and moralising. But moralising without inspiration is indifferent stuff. Washington Irving, who came questing down the glades of Sherwood in a leisurely way a century ago, has perhaps written best, but one feels that even he was merely paying his respects to the patriarchs of Sherwood as a matter of duty. Then there is William Howitt, most respectable and blameless of moralists, but Howitt wrote as though he were perpetually engaged in improving his own mind and that of the reader. These are not the interpreters whom Sherwood awaits. Ruskin might have written the chapter on the oaks of Birkland and Bilhalgh which in sheer glorious riot of musical words would have caught the impression which the forest stamps on the enthusiastic mind ; or even better still, Richard Jefferies, with his profounder knowledge of tree and forest life, might have revealed its secrets. Perhaps—it is the best that the present generation can hope for—Mr. W. H. Hudson may be drawn towards Sherwood, and do for it what he has done for the Sussex Downs, the Hampshire Uplands, and the Land's End. Some of the best prose descriptions of the forest are those which appear incidentally in the novels of the Nottinghamshire novelist, Mr. James Prior, who in " Forest Folk," " Fortuna Chance," and " The Walking Gentleman," gives many a charming pen picture of the district where he lives and which he has made his own. " Fortuna Chance " is a tale of the " Forty-five " ; " Forest Folk " deals with the machinery-smashing days of the industrial revolution ; " The Walking Gentleman " is a merry fantasy, informed with wit, shrewd philosophy, and penetrating observation of men and things. They all deal in their several ways with the Forest and its villages.

The Forest is their common background, and with the sure touch of the skilful artist the novelist makes his Sherwood setting as real and individual as are the heaths of Dorset in the pages of Thomas Hardy.

It is curious, too, that no poet has ever worthily celebrated the Forest of Sherwood in song, save Keats, who probably never set eyes upon it. Though Byron lived at Newstead, and his own woods had once formed part of the forest, he never refers to its glories. But inspiration is capricious, and the greatest nature poems, after all, are not poems of description but of introspection suggested by exquisite landscape—"poems of the imagination," as Wordsworth calls them. Most of those who have essayed to write verse on Sherwood seem to have been obsessed by Robin Hood and to have been incapable of conjuring up any figure but his. So Sherwood still awaits the poet who will treat his subject as Wordsworth treated the banks of the Wye above Tintern Abbey, or as Meredith wrote of the Woods of Westermain :—

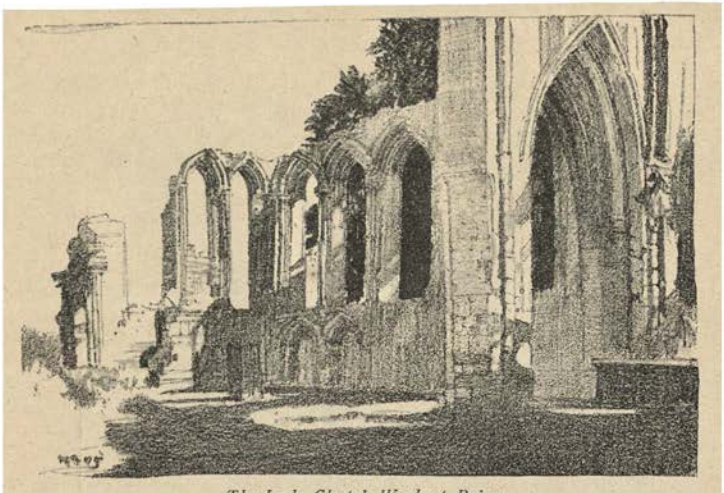
Enter these enchanted woods,
You who dare.
Nothing harms beneath the leaves
More than waves a swimmer cleaves.
Toss your heart up with the lark,
Foot at peace with mouse and worm,
Fair you fare.
Only at a dread of dark
Quaver and they quit their form ;
Thousand eyeballs under hoods
Have you by the hair ;
Enter these enchanted woods
You who dare.

In those lines is the spirit of all woodland, and therefore of Sherwood, too, and to catch it you must get away from the forest roads, and give wide berth to the brake-loads of sight-seers following one another in quick succession on the appointed days when the gates are open. Take the forest paths boldly and let them lead you where they will ; trust a ready wit to make your peace with any challenging keeper who will judge fairly shrewdly not perhaps whether your foot is at peace with mouse and worm, but certainly whether it is at peace with the sacred pheasant. Then, whatever the season, you will not fail to catch the charm of forest mystery, which broods even in the

most modest little plantation if only you have sufficient sensitiveness in your own soul to feel it.

I have spoken of keepers. But the most effective keepers of Sherwood, especially when midsummer is verging on autumn, are the forest flies. Fierce their attack and merciless, and sharp and often poisonous their sting. Nothing is more humiliating than to be driven out of the forest by a swarm of flies and nothing more hopelessly disconcerting. But that is the fate of many. If the god of flies—and there used to be such a deity in the rustic calendar—has any sanctuary left in England it is surely to be found in the green rides of Birkland.

Old View of Welbeck from the Lake.



The Lady Chapel, Worksop Priory.

CHAPTER XVI

MANSFIELD WOODHOUSE; WORKSOP; THE DUKERIES; WELBECK

FROM Mansfield we turn north towards Worksop. Mansfield Woodhouse, a little to the left of the main road, has the scanty remains of a Roman villa, discovered by Major Rooke a century and more ago, but the most interesting event in the annals of the village is the savage reception which the villagers once gave to George Fox, the Quaker. He tells the story in his own inimitable way:—

"Now, after I was at liberty from Nottingham gaol, where I had been kept prisoner a pretty long time, I travelled, as before, in the work of the Lord. Coming to Mansfield Woodhouse, I was moved to go to the steeple-house there, and declare the truth to the priest and people, but the people fell upon me in great rage, struck me down, and almost stifled and smothered me, and I was cruelly beaten and bruised by them with their hands, Bibles and sticks. Then they haled me out, though I was hardly able to stand, and put me into the stocks, where I sate some hours; and they brought dog-whips and horse-whips, threatening to whip me. After some time, they had me before the magistrate, at a knight's house, where there

were many great persons; who, seeing how evilly I had been used, after much threatening set me at liberty. But the rude people stoned me out of the town for preaching the word of life to them. I was scarce able to go, or well to stand, by reason of the ill-usage I had received, yet with much ado I got about a mile from the town, and then I met with some people that gave me something to comfort me, because I was inwardly bruised; but the Lord's power soon healed me again. That

Worksop Priory.

day some people were convinced of the Lord's truth and turned to his preaching, at which I rejoiced."

Nettleworth Hall, two miles further on, was the home of the Wylds, the most famous of whom, Gervase, fitted out a ship at his own cost against the Spanish Armada, and lived on to the great age of ninety-three. The monuments of the family are in Warsop Church. At Warsop we cross the Meden, and at Cuckney the Poulter, two of the streams which do so much to beautify the great estates of the Dukeries, and thenceforward the road skirts the edge of Welbeck and Worksop Manor till it reaches Worksop.

For its own sake no one would stay in Worksop. It was doubtless agreeable enough in the old days when it was a tiny market town on the fringe of the forest, with a noble priory at the height of its glory, and a pretty stream running through its shallow valley, but it has lost most of its beauty now, and its long, thin stretch of straggling street has little to commend it. Busy it is, and even bustling at times, for many roads converge upon it, and it is a useful centre for tourists. But its attractions are few. The Castle Hill, which was the nucleus of the old

Worksop Priory Gateway.

town, is just a tree-clad mound of soft red stone; there is a cluster of fair inns in the centre, where the road broadens into an unpretentious market-place, and the projecting picturesque upper story of the Old Ship still bravely fronts the street. The most beautiful thing in Worksop is the Gate-house of the ancient Priory of Radford, founded for a colony of Austin Canons by one William de Lovetot, lord of the manor. Of this Priory church the nave remains, very similar in style and general appearance to that of Southwell Minster. It owes its preservation to the fact that it was apportioned for the use of the parish. Thus, when all the rest of the Priory fell into decay, this was preserved. The ruins of the beautiful thirteenth-century Lady

Chapel are the chief fragments of interest, beside the exquisite Gate-house. This is incomparably the finest and best preserved of its kind in England, and though, unfortunately, it now stands in poor and mean surroundings, not even these can detract from the dignity of this noble relic. It served as guest-house as well as gate-house, and the large guest-room and small chapel for the use of travellers still remain. The building is now carefully preserved, and well repays a visit, but it was not always so tended, and the worst vandalism seems to have been permitted just a hundred years ago. For, in 1814, two or three indignant communications appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* from tourists who narrated that they had seen boys climbing out of the windows and throwing down all the loose stones they could tear away, and making the effigies in the niches the targets for their missiles. It seems that the Gate-house had been used as a school, and when for a brief time that use was discontinued, no steps were taken to protect the building. The oak ceiling in the high gateway and the outside staircase are two of its most interesting features.

Worksop or Radford Priory was surrendered to the king in 1539, the last Prior, Thomas Stokkes, receiving a pension of £50 a year, while his fifteen subordinates had to be content with annual pittances of from £6 to £2, and may have thought themselves fortunate to receive any compensation at all. Two years later the king granted the Priory estates to the lord of the manor, Francis Earl of Shrewsbury, at a rental of £23 8*s.*, and on service of providing his Majesty with a right-hand glove, and supporting, on coronation day, the royal right arm, if it wearied under the weight of the sceptre. This was what the lawyers call a "favourable" lease, and the next earl and his countess, the famous Bess of Hardwick, built on the old lands of the Priory a fine house, the first Worksop Manor, which we passed a mile out of the town on the road from Mansfield. This was one of the countess' favourite residences—and she had the choice of many—and here, when Elizabeth was on the throne, the earl and countess acted as gaolers to Mary Queen of Scots. A letter from that unhappy Queen, dated September 3, 1583, is still extant, in which she says that she had been "allowed to visit Shrewsbury's seat at Worksop," and in another she pointedly denies the story that she had freedom to walk in

the forest. This sounds harsh treatment, but the earl and countess were responsible for the safe-keeping of their charge, and Mary was continually plotting to escape. No one can blame her for that, for she had been a prisoner since 1569, and had spent many weary days in passing from place to place. From Tutbury to Sheffield, from Sheffield to Wingfield, from Wingfield to Worksop, she rang the changes on the earl's many mansions, only once being permitted a visit to "the baynes

Worksop Priory.

at Buckstones," where the watch kept over her was closer than ever. Poor Queen and poor gaolers, for their task was almost as irksome to them as the endless restraint was to their captive. Prisoners are proverbially hard to please. Like Napoleon at St. Helena, Queen Mary was often loud in complaint of the draughtiness of her quarters, and Walpole, writing long afterwards, spoke of the "wretched little bed-chamber" at Worksop, which the countess provided for the Queen "within her own lofty one." But soon after came the Babington conspiracy,

hatched at Worksop and Wingfield, which showed the necessity of sleepless vigilance.

A few years later we read of James I. being splendidly entertained at Worksop on his way to London to assume the crown. First there was hunting in the park at which the King was much delighted, and then a sumptuous feast at the Hall, followed by "soul-ravishing musique." During the Civil Wars little was heard of Worksop, and the house does not seem to have been garrisoned. Whenever Charles was in the neighbourhood he preferred to rest at Welbeck, which was safer, because less exposed. Later, the estate passed by marriage to the Dukes of Norfolk, and the Duke of Norfolk, in 1745, had strong Jacobite leanings, though very wisely he did not openly declare himself on the Pretender's side. But an interesting document in the Record Office indicates clearly his political sympathies. It is the sworn information laid in 1754 by a woman named Margaret Brownhill, who described what she had seen at Worksop nine years before when, with two other young women, she went to visit one of the servants at the hall, Elizabeth Walkden. Evidently the family were away, and Elizabeth showed her friends all over the house, and at last took them out upon the leads. Then comes the evidence of treason:—

"Walking there and looking about them, the said Eliz. Walkden said she would let them see a greater rarity than they had seen. Upon which she raised up the edge of a sheet of lead with her knife till she got her fingers under it, and then she desired them to assist her to lift it up, which accordingly they did, and then under that she took up a trap door where there was a pair of stairs, which they went down into a little room which was all dark. But the said Eliz. Walkden, opening the window, shewed there was a fireplace, a bed, and a few chairs in the said room, and asking her what use that room was for she said it was to hide people in in troublesome times. Then the said Eliz. Walkden asked them if they could find the way out of that room into the next, upon which they looked round and could find none. Then the said Eliz. Walkden went to the side of the room next to the stair foot and opened a door in the wainscoat about the middle of the height of the room, which they looked into, but it being dark they could not see anything in it. But the said Eliz. Walkden said she could not go into it, it was so full of arms, upon which she shut the door and they went up-

stairs, and then she shut the trap door and laid down the sheet of lead as it was before, which was so nice she could not discern it from another part of the leads and believes she could not find it if she was there again."

The story is quite credible, for during the 'Forty-Five the Duke of Norfolk was so strongly suspected of complicity in the rising that the Earl of Rutland was ordered to search Worksop Manor. It seems that a woman had sent word to the authorities that arms were being stored there. The Earl presented himself and told the Duchess his errand. Her Grace was a woman of resource and presence of mind, for instead of shewing annoyance or alarm she invited her visitor to dinner and, while they were dining, she caused the servant in question to be spirited away. So when the meal was over, the search was fruitless, for there was no guide to the secret hiding-place.

In 1756 Horace Walpole spent two days at Worksop. "The house," he wrote to a friend, "is huge and one of the magnificent works of old Bess of Hardwicke, who guarded the Queen of Scots here for some time in a wretched little bed-chamber within her own lofty one; there is a tolerable little picture of Mary's needlework. The great apartment is vast and trist, the whole leanly furnished; the great gallery, of above 200 ft., at the top of the house is divided into a library and into nothing. The chapel is decent. There is no prospect and the barren face of the country is richly furred with evergreen plantations under the directions of the late Lord Petre." Still more interesting is the account given about the same time by Dr. Pococke, "the Oriental Traveller," who described the house as having "a grand look like a castle," when seen from a distance, with round turrets at each end of the building and a square turret rising in the middle. Then he goes on to speak of the great outdoor improvements which were in progress:—

"There are 1,700 acres under improvements; the ground is very fine, there being a low ground which winds round the higher hills that open in one part, and on each side of it are several little hills divided by dales, which are planted with clumps of trees, mostly evergreens; and among them the larch, which is very beautiful when they leave the boughes to grow from the bottom. On the top of one of the farthest hills to the west there is to be a temple, and about the middle of the designed water a bridge in the manner and style of Lord Pembroke's,

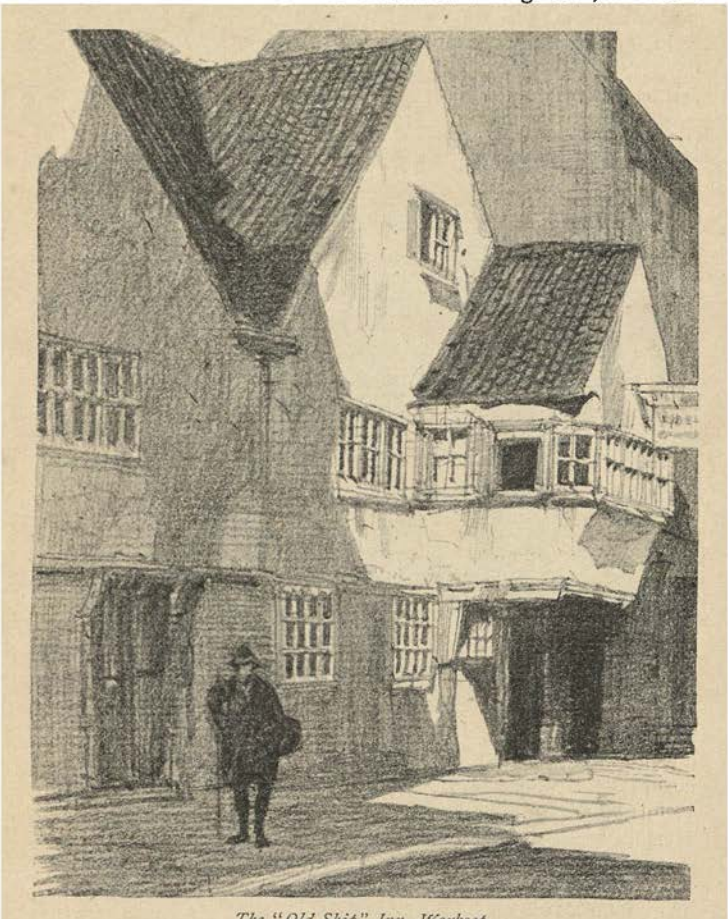
and at the north-east end of the water is to be a grotesque building under a hill with a grotto, all which is drawn out according to Lord Petre's design, and they are ploughing up the park by degrees in order to bring in the ground ; for the large parks in this country seem for the most part originally to be large commons enclosed, being a sandy poor soil, which naturally produces little but fern."

No wonder that Dr. Johnson thought meanly of Dr. Pococke's style if the sentences just quoted are a fair example. Yet Pococke, who was Bishop of Ossory, had a great reputation as a literary traveller on the strength of having been in Asia Minor and in Egypt and of having written a narrative of his journeyings. In his latter days he used to make solemn tours through the United Kingdom, portentous affairs, during which he took laborious notes of all he saw. Happily, Richard Cumberland chanced to see him on one of these progresses, and touched him off so neatly that the sketch is worth quoting :—

" That celebrated oriental traveller was a man of mild manners and primitive simplicity ; having given the world a full detail of his researches in Egypt he seemed to hold himself excused from saying anything more about them, and observed in general an obdurate taciturnity. In his carriage and deportment he appeared to have contracted something of the Arab character. Yet there was no austerity in his silence, and though his air was solemn, his temper was serene. When we were on our road to Ireland I saw from the windows of the inn at Daventry a cavalcade of horsemen approaching at a gentle trot, headed by an elderly chief in clerical attire, who was followed by five servants at distances geometrically measured and most precisely maintained and who, on entering the inn, proved to be this distinguished prelate conducting his horde with the phlegmatic patience of a sheik."

Such was the cavalcade, no doubt, which filed up to inspect the improvements at Worksop. Not long after Pococke's visit disaster came. The house was burnt to the ground in 1761, and the loss in paintings and statuary alone was estimated at £100,000. But the noble owner was not discouraged. That was just the moment when the spirit of the English aristocracy was at its proudest, and its ideas were most grandiose. The Duke of Norfolk grasped at the opportunity presented by misfortune. He determined that Worksop Manor should be the

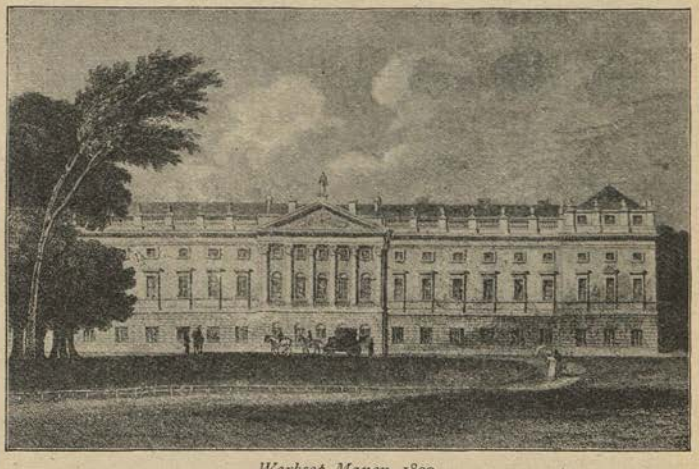
finest mansion in England. Very likely, one motive which actuated him was a desire to outshine his neighbour, the Duke



The "Old Ship" Inn, Worksop.

of Newcastle, who was a man of colossal vanity. So he called Paine to his aid, and the best architect of the day planned a

stately mansion which was to be, when completed, the biggest palace in the land. The foundation stone was laid in 1763, and an army of five hundred workmen was set to work. But only one side of the projected quadrangle was ever finished. The Duke's only son and heir died. What use to build for a stranger? So no more than a fragment of the plan was completed, but even this is said to have had 500 rooms. The old prints depict it as a big stone building, 300 feet long, four storeys high, with a portico of six Corinthian pillars surmounted by an



Worksop Manor, 1820.
From an engraving by W. Wallis, from a drawing by J. P. Neale.

elaborate pediment. Its fate, if it actually was designed to outvie the magnificence of the then Duke of Newcastle, was very curious. For, in 1840, a later Duke of Newcastle—the anti-Reform Duke—bought the entire estate from a later Duke of Norfolk and ruthlessly pulled most of the mansion down, rather than be at the expense of its upkeep. And that was the end of the long connection between Worksop and the Talbots and the Talbots' heirs, which had lasted unbroken for more than three centuries.

The existing Worksop Manor is a fine house, and the park is a fine park, which still deserves John Evelyn's praise of it as

" a sweet, delectable place," but it is no longer a Dukery, though to it belongs the distinction of being the original Dukery. The Duke of Newcastle, who heavily encumbered his Clumber estate in order to make the purchase, did not long enjoy his new possession, and part of it, including the manor, soon passed into other hands. It has been for some years the property of Sir John Robinson.

We now enter upon the district which bears the well-known title of the Dukeries. This may roughly be described as a territory some seven to eight miles square, with a considerable piece cut out of the south-west corner, extending from Norton and Cuckney to the twin Warsops. The quadrilateral is bounded by high roads, the Ollerton and Warsop road on the south, the road from Ollerton to Checkerhouse on the east, the Retford and Worksop road on the north, and the Worksop and Mansfield road on the west. All within is the Dukeries. There are towns and villages on the boundary roads, but inside the charmed precinct only a few small hamlets, though it is bisected by the important high road from Ollerton to Worksop. This fragment of England is divided into the three principalities—for Worksop Manor, as has been said, has lost its high estate—of Welbeck, Clumber and Thoresby, belonging respectively to the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Newcastle, and Earl Manvers. The Thoresby estate, as will be seen later, was for a time an actual Dukery, during the short-lived Dukedom of Kingston, which was held by the ancestors of the present Earl Manvers. The interest of the Dukeries, therefore, is twofold. It possesses the attraction which naturally attaches to a cluster of stately houses and spacious parks, associated for many generations with families which have played always a distinguished and often an eminent part in English social and political life. But it has this further interest, that these three parks contain nearly all that is left of the ancient Forest of Sherwood, which possesses, in its turn, a two-fold glamour, the glamour of a romantic past and the charm of living immemorial beauty. It is no wonder that the Dukeries cast a spell over those who know the region best. As a district of enchantment, of old oaks, of noble names, of great memories, of high romance, it has not its peer in England. The New Forest may vie with it in the beauty of its woodlands, but it has few associations to match those of Sherwood. And, to my way of thinking, a place, which has little recorded history, is

cold, whatever its charm, compared with those which are indissolubly linked to our regard by a long chain of human associations.

Of the ancient Abbey of Welbeck little need be said. It was founded in 1154 by Thomas de Cuckney—Cuckney is a hamlet close by the river Poulter—for a colony of Praemonstratensian Canons from Newhouse in Lincolnshire, and it became the parent of seven other houses in different parts of England. It was a foundation, therefore, of some importance, and fulfilled its purpose neither better nor worse than its neighbours, till the

Creswell Crags.

secular arm of Henry VIII. drove the little colony into the wilderness. Nothing of the old Abbey buildings remains visible above ground, but, as at Rufford, the refectory is now the servants' hall. The abbey soon passed by purchase into the hands of the Countess of Shrewsbury, the great snapper-up of unconsidered estates—at that time going very cheap, owing to the glut of church lands thrown on the market—and she left it to Sir Charles Cavendish, her second son by her second husband, and brother of the Sir William Cavendish whose descendants became Earls and Dukes of Devonshire. Sir Charles Cavendish, whose portrait hangs in the great hall at Welbeck, was father of the Sir William Cavendish who afterwards became Earl, Marquis, and finally Duke of Newcastle.

Strangers are often confused to find the name of Newcastle so prominent at the Duke of Portland's house at Welbeck, when the Duke of Newcastle's estate is at Clumber. The explanation, of course, is that Welbeck was carried into the family of the Duke of Portland by a marriage with the heiress of the Cavendishes and the original Duke of Newcastle. Clumber only dates from the middle of the eighteenth century, and the existing Dukedom of Newcastle has a very slender connection with Welbeck and the House of Cavendish.

The first Duke of Newcastle was the Royalist General of the Civil Wars. Charles II., whose Governor he had been in the old days before the troubles, gave him the Dukedom in 1664, in compensation for his enormous losses, said to amount to £941,303. But they were calculated, it is to be observed, "at Six in the Hundred and Use upon Use"—or, as we should say, compound interest at six per cent.—and they included some private debts of the King's own personal obligation. The Duke had already been rewarded very liberally in the way of honours by Charles I. Born plain William Cavendish, James I., in 1620, had made him Viscount Mansfield and Baron Bolsover in quittance of an old debt, and in 1628 Charles I. made him Earl of Newcastle-under-Tyne and Baron Cavendish of Bolsover. The Marquessate of Newcastle and Earldom of Ogle followed in 1643, after war had broken out, and the Marquis had gained some considerable successes as general in command of the Northern army. He had beaten Fairfax in one or two encounters in Yorkshire; he had taken Lincoln and recaptured Gainsborough, and the Parliamentary army was locked up in Hull. He was then urgently summoned south, for the Royalist plan of campaign was a simultaneous march on London from the north and west. This was the King's golden chance for ending the war. Newcastle threw it away. Instead of marching on London, he turned back to Yorkshire and began the siege of Hull. Not only did he fail to capture that town, but the siege was raised and he was badly beaten at Winceby in October 1643, and shut up in York. Then, in turn, Rupert raised the siege and extricated him, and together they followed the retreating Parliamentarians till they reached the field of Marston Moor, where Newcastle was utterly routed in a battle fought against his advice. Rather than face the laughter of the Court—such is the phrase attributed to him—he rode to Scarborough

and took ship for the Continent. "I will go to Holland," he said, on the morning after the disaster. "And I will rally my men," was Rupert's answer. No one can doubt which was the more soldierly temper of the two. But Nature had never intended Newcastle for a General. Clarendon summed up his character well:—

"He was a very fine gentleman, active and full of courage, and most accomplished in those qualities of horsemanship, dancing and fencing, which accompany a good breeding, in which his delight was. Besides that, he was amorous in poetry and music, to which he indulged the greatest part of his time. He loved monarchy as it was the foundation and support of his own greatness, and the Church, as it was well constituted for the splendour and security of the Crown . . . He liked the pomp and absolute authority of a general well, and preserved the dignity of it to the full. . . . But the substantial part and fatigue of a general he did not in any degree understand, being utterly unacquainted with war."

There were sadly too many generals "utterly unacquainted with war" holding important posts in the Royalist army, and the cause suffered in consequence. The truth is that Newcastle was a dilettante, brave enough in personal bearing, but much more interested in the arts, in letters, and in horsemanship than in the strategy and the conduct of war. That he is one of the best known figures of his time is mainly due to the circumstance that Vandyke painted him, and that his wife not only idolised him in life but idealised him in her writings. In her eyes he was a paragon of perfection. Here is a typical passage: "The truth is, my lord is a person whose humour is neither extravagantly merry nor unnecessarily sad; his mind is above his fortune, as his generosity is above his purse; his courage above danger, his justice above bribes; his friendship above self-interest; his truth too firm for falsehood, his temperance beyond temptation; his behaviour is manly without formality and free without constraint; his nature is noble and his disposition sweet." And so on for page after page of a volume which moved Pepys to describe it as "the ridiculous history of the Duke, which shews her to be a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman, and he an asse to suffer her to write what she does to and of him." But against that far too contemptuous verdict must be set the enthusiastic praises of Charles

Lamb who wrote of "that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Duchess of Newcastle." A woman of whom two such shrewd observers as Pepys and Charles Lamb could form such remarkably contrary verdicts, can have been no ordinary person. And an extraordinarily eccentric woman this Margaret Lucas was. Youngest of the eight daughters of Sir Thomas Lucas of Colchester, she was maid of honour for a time to Queen Henrietta Maria, and then the adoring wife of Newcastle and the sharer of his exile. Here is her own considered portrait of herself:—

"As for my disposition, it is more inclining to be melancholy than merry, but not crabbed or peevish melancholy, but soft, melting, solitary and contemplative melancholy; and I am apt to weep rather than laugh, not that I do often either of them: also I am tender-natured, for it troubles my conscience to kill a fly, and the groans of a dying beast strike my soul; also when I place a particular affection, I love extraordinarily and constantly, yet not fondly, but soberly and observingly, not to hang about them as a trouble, but to wait upon them as a servant."

Moreover, she adds that she was "very ambitious, but neither for beauty, wit, title, wealth or power, but as they are steps to raise me to Fancies Tower, which is to live by remembrance in all ages." Her ambition has been realised. "Mad Madge of Newcastle," as some of her contemporaries styled her, has a place of her own in "Fancies Tower," from which she is never likely to be dislodged. Her descriptions of her girlhood, of her visits to London, of her training, of her family, are of unique interest as a true picture of her times. Moreover, she wrote now and then with wonderful charm of style, into which apparently she dropped by lucky accident, for passages of great natural beauty are followed by pages of grotesque conceits and tedious verbiage. "I pass my time," she says quite frankly in one place, "rather with scribbling than writing, with words than wit." Or again, "my letters seem rather as a ragged rout than as a well armed body." Those are perfectly sound self-criticisms. The Duchess wrote, as other ladies have sighed, "for very wantonness." She composed multitudes of poems, philosophical treatises, "Female Orations," and the like, which are almost unrelieved nonsense, yet strangely lightened here and there by some flower of fancy

or choice phrase, worthy of the best poets. Writing of her mother she said, "Her beauty was beyond the ruin of Time," and she summed up the Parliamentarians in a scathing phrase, "They would have pulled God out of His Heaven, had they had power, as they did Royalty out of his throne." No wonder Charles Lamb loved her quaint conceits and curious vagaries.

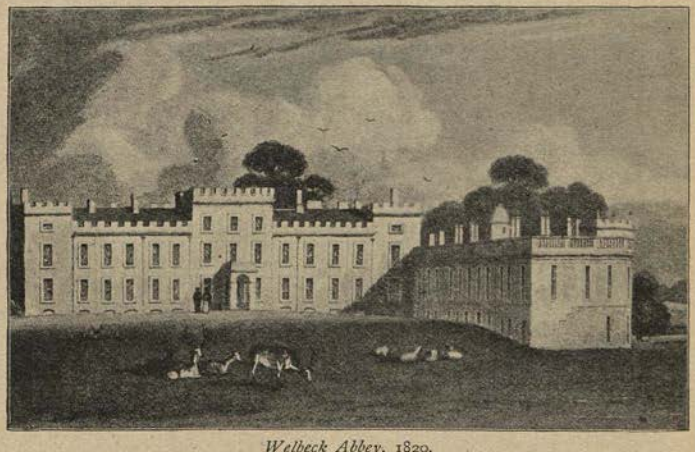
We have no space here to tell in greater detail the story of the Cavalier and his Lady, during their long exile in Holland, when the marquis was at his wits' end to raise money, and eventually had to leave his wife in pawn behind him, so pressing became his creditors. No one was happier at the Restoration than the Marquis of Newcastle, and no one was more glad than he to quit the roystering Court at Whitehall and retire to Welbeck to retrieve his shattered fortunes, as soon as the king would grant him leave. He found Welbeck and Bolsover "much out of repair"—as can well be imagined—pillaged of their furniture and their treasures, but he and the Duchess set themselves to restore the family fortunes, and they did it with surprising success. Walpole might sneer at what he called "the picture of foolish nobility presented by this stately poetic couple," but Welbeck was better and sweeter and purer than Whitehall. In their rural retirement they indulged their poetic and literary fancies. The Duke wrote his famous book on Horsemanship, the earliest treatise in English on the *haute école* —a noble volume with fine illustrations by Diepenbeke which shew as background to the prancing and curvetting horses contemporary pictures of Welbeck and Bolsover. Moreover, he amused himself with comedies and poetry, while the duchess wrote plays and philosophy and letters and tragedies and orations and the Lord knows what. Occasionally she went to town, where crowds followed her in the streets, so eccentric was her dress, and the wits at Court made fun of her, while learned dons at the universities pretended to her face that she was a prodigy of learning, and, no doubt, laughed heartily behind her back. Some one once congratulated the duke on having such a wise woman for his duchess. "Sir," was his answer, "a very wise woman is a very foolish thing." A penetrating observation! Yet she adored him all the more and went on scribbling her adoration to the end, and now and then wrote a charming little lyric.

A poet I am neither born nor bred
But to a witty poet married,
Whose brain is fresh and pleasant as the Spring,
Where fancies grow and where the Muses sing.
There oft I lean my head and listening hark
T' observe his words and all his fancies mark,
And from that garden flowers of fancy take
Whereof a posy up in verse I make.
Thus I that have no garden of my own
There gather flowers that are newly blown.

Could anything be more delightful? And could there be a more befitting and becoming memorial of this fascinating pair than the noble tomb in Westminster Abbey where they lie side by side in stately dignity, in all the pomp of pillared marble and exquisite sculpture—"the loyall Duke of Newcastle and his Dutches . . . a wise, wittie and learned lady . . . and a loveing and carefull wife." She may have been "Mad Madge," but she had not her equal among all the leering beauties of the Court of King Charles II.

While the Marquis of Newcastle had been impatiently awaiting the Restoration in his exile on the Continent, Welbeck had suffered severely. The house had been fortified and garrisoned for the King during the war, though it had little natural strength of situation. So when, after Marston Moor in August, 1644, Lord Manchester came marching south by way of Worksop and Welbeck, he sent in a summons for the surrender of Welbeck and it was yielded to him "upon composition." "I was willing to give them large terms," wrote Manchester to the Committee in London, "because I was not in a position to besiege a place so well fortified as that was. I, therefore, gave the officers and soldiers liberty to march out with all their arms and colours flying, but when I came to take possession of the house most of the soldiers came to me to lay down their arms, desiring tickets of me to return to their own homes, the which I granted them." Manchester put in a garrison of Notts men to hold Welbeck till instructions came from London whether it should be "slighted," and he pledged his word for the quiet abode of the Marquis' daughters, who seem to have stayed at home throughout the war. Before the Governor, as he was called, marched away to Newark with the honours of war, all the silver plate at Welbeck was put into two hogsheads and buried secretly under the brewhouse floor, and the memoranda are still preserved with the signatures of

the Marquis' eldest daughter and the Governor, relating to this silver and to the lady's engagement to find a round sum of £600 for the pay of the soldiers out of the value of the plate, if no other funds were forthcoming. The Governor of Welbeck was a certain Colonel Fretchville and he had with him a Frenchman named Major Jammot. These two officers retired to Newark, but in the following July they seem to have turned the tables pretty effectively. For a body of Newark horse, under the command of Sir Richard Willis, made a surprise march through the forest and suddenly appeared before Welbeck. The pickets



Welbeck Abbey, 1820.
From an engraving by R. Acon, from a drawing by J. P. Neale.

of the Parliament garrison were driven in and as the bridge over the moat was let down for them to enter, the Newark horse, who had been hiding in ambush, made a sudden dash forward and reached the bridge before the defenders could raise it again. They had pulled it up a foot, so—as the Duke of Wellington would have said—it was "a devilish close run thing," but Major Jammot was not to be denied, and he and his fellows got in and settled the matter with their pistols. It was a dashing little exploit, and three weeks later, on August 15, 1645, the King was told all about it, for he crossed to Welbeck from Chatsworth and rested there a day or two before he got on the move again.

During the Protectorate, the house was practically stripped bare of all its furniture, and the Duke and Duchess returned to a very desolate home. Here is the Duchess' own account of the havoc which had been made in the park :—

" Of eight parks which my Lord had before the wars, there was but one left that was not quite destroyed, viz., Welbeck Park, of about four miles' compass ; for my Lord's brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, who bought out the life of my Lord in that lordship, saved most of it from being cut down, and in Blore Park there were some few deer left. The rest of the parks were totally defaced and destroyed, both wood, pales and deer, amongst which was also Clipston Park, of seven miles compass, wherein my Lord had taken much delight formerly, it being rich of wood and containing the greatest and tallest timber-trees of all the woods he had ; insomuch that only the pale-row was valued at £2,000. It was watered by a pleasant river that runs through it, full of fish and otters ; was well-stocked with deer, full of hares and had great store of partridges, pouts, pheasants, etc., beside all sort of water-fowl, so that this park afforded all manner of sports for hunting, hawking, coursing, fishing, etc., for which my Lord esteemed it very much. And although his patience and wisdom is such that I never perceived him sad or discontented for his own losses and misfortunes, yet when he beheld the ruins of that park, I observed him troubled, though he did little express it, only saying he had been in hopes it would not have been so much defaced as he found it, there being not one timber-tree in it left for shelter. However, he patiently bore what could not be helped and gave present order for the cutting down of some wood that was left him in a place near adjoining, to repale it and got from several friends deer to stock it."

Welbeck, however, speedily recovered its ancient splendour, and became more magnificent than ever under the Duke's artistic care. It was he who collected the superb Vandykes—his own portrait among the number—which are the glory of the great dining room, and it was he who built the old riding school, now connected with the house by a curving passage way. The interior of the riding school has been transformed out of all knowledge in recent times, for part of it now forms the principal library and the other part has been converted into a chapel. The exterior remains in its original state ; the chapel, lined

Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

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with rich marbles, was built within the shell of the older building, but with walls and ceiling of its own. This fine chapel, which has an exquisite baptistery and fine bronze doors leading into the library and the house, was built by the present Duke of Portland.

The first Duke of Newcastle died in 1677 and was succeeded by his son, Henry. Of him we get some interesting glimpses in the "Memoirs" of Sir John Reresby, a Yorkshire Squire and Member of Parliament, who was on confidential terms with many of the most influential men of his time. He describes how the Duke "travelled like a great Prince, with three coaches and about forty attendants on horseback," how they took five days on the road from London to Newark, and how his Grace showed him such civility and attention that at the inns he "forced me to accept the second chamber, wherever we lodged, before his own daughters." This Duke's only son, the Earl of Ogle, died in his teens. Even when he was still in the nursery his grandfather had proposed marriage between him and the sole heiress of the last Earl of Northumberland, of the Percy line, then in her cradle. The heiress' grandmother thought such negotiations somewhat premature, but the match actually took place some years later. However, the death of the boy bridegroom left the Countess of Ogle a widow at fifteen, and the project of uniting the vast Newcastle and Northumberland estates was frustrated. In addition to this son the Duke had three daughters, and Sir John Reresby seems to have spent no little part of his time in acting as agent between the Duke and the various suitors to his daughters' hands. There were eligible bridegrooms in plenty, but they all seem to have pressed for ready money dowries, and the Duke was disinclined to part with cash. Hence severe family dissensions, which occasionally reached a serious pitch, as the following amusing extract from Reresby will show:—

"Nov. 4, 1686:—I went to see the Duke of Newcastle at Welbeck, but was extremely surprised to find a great disorder in the family by reason of so great a falling out between the Duke and the Duchess that they were parted from bed and board. The occasion of it was my lady's desire to have her daughter Margaret betrothed to my Lord Shrewsbury with a greater portion than his grace was willing to give her and her unwillingness to marry her youngest daughter to Fitzroy, the King's natural son, which the Duke desired, saying she should never marry a papist and a bastard. The young ladies took

the part of their mother and joined with her against their father, which infinitely troubled my lord Duke. He desired me to go and speak to the Duchess and his daughters, to make them friends, which I endeavoured all I could but to no purpose. I found them very foolishly obstinate, for the Duchess had had so great a share of government in the family that she expected everything should go as she pleased. In this humour he burnt his will and made another settlement, not at all to the advantage of those daughters."

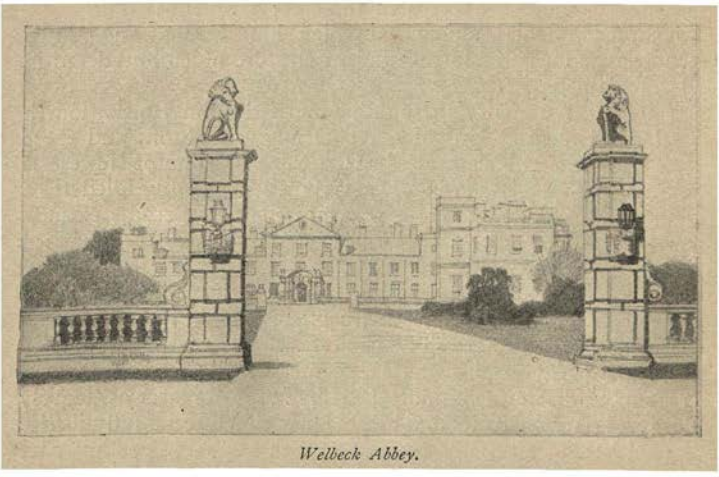
Those who are interested in these revelations of the way in which matrimonial alliances in high life were arranged two centuries and a half ago will find a rich store of curious detail in Reresby's pages.

One of Duke Henry's daughters married John Holles, fourth Earl of Clare, and lord of neighbouring Haughton, and three years after the Duke's death in 1691 the Dukedom of Newcastle was revived in his son-in-law's favour. This Duke died from a hunting accident in 1711, and again the title became extinct, for he had no son. His daughter, Lady Margaret, married in 1711 Lord Harley, afterwards second Earl of Oxford. "They say the girl is handsome," wrote Dean Swift, "and has good sense, but red hair." She was a great heiress, in spite of the fact that her father left all he could leave away from her to Lord Pelham's son, who became Duke of Newcastle of the second creation, and she was immortalised by Matthew Prior as "lovely Peggy." Her portraits and marble bust at Welbeck fully justify the epithet. This Lady Margaret plays a very important part in Welbeck history, for by her marriage with Lord Harley she brought to Welbeck the papers, pictures, treasures, and estates both of the Harleys and the Veres. She had no son, and the Earldom of Oxford lapsed at her husband's death, but their only daughter married the second Duke of Portland, whose principal seat was then at Bulstrode.

Lady Oxford spent her long widowhood at Welbeck, and freely exercised her love of building. It was she who built the spacious Gothic Hall, with its somewhat fantastic ceiling of fretted pendants in stone, and repaired and extended the south front. Horace Walpole, writing soon after her death in 1756, says that she spent her time in "collecting and monumenting the portraits and reliques of all the great families from which she descended and which centred in her." His description of what he saw

at Welbeck is worth quoting, because most of the objects he mentions are still highly treasured there.

"Oh portraits! I went to Welbeck. It is impossible to describe the bales of Cavendishes, Harleys, Holleses, Veres, and Ogles; every chamber is tapestried with them; nay, with ten thousand other fat morsels, all their histories inscribed, all their arms, crests, devices, sculptured on chimneys of various English marbles in ancient forms (and, to say truth, most of them ugly). Then such a Gothic hall, with pendant fretwork



Welbeck Abbey.

in imitation of the old, and with a chimney-piece extremely like mine in the library. Such water-colour pictures! such historic fragments! In short, such and so much of everything I like that my party thought they should never get me away again. There is Prior's portrait and the Column and Varelst's flower on which he wrote; and the authoress Duchess of Newcastle in a theatric habit, which she generally wore and consequently looking as mad as the present Duchess, and dukes of the same name looking as foolish as the present Duke, and Lady Mary Wortley, drawn as an authoress, with rather better pretensions; and cabinets and glasses wainscotted with the Greendale oak, which was so large that an old steward wisely cut a way through it to make a triumphal passage for his lord and lady

on their wedding, and only killed it! But it is impossible to tell you half what there is."

What was impossible then is a thousand times more impossible now, with all the additions of the last century and a half. There are cabinets full of exquisite miniatures and such historical treasures as the single pearl ear-ring worn by Charles I. on the scaffold at Whitehall and given to his daughter, the Princess Royal, mother of William III. There, too, is the chalice from which the "Royal Martyr" took communion on the fatal morning; the rosary of Queen Henrietta; the emerald seal of their graceless son, Charles II., and the dagger of Henry VIII. Naturally, the family portraits have grown into a host innumerable since Walpole's day, and the master portraitists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are fairly well represented, though there happens to be none of the more famous masterpieces of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney, Raeburn, and Lawrence at Welbeck, and the Vandykes overshadow all. Two of the most recent portraits, however, are sure to delight the Horace Walpoles of succeeding generations. These are the two striking canvases of the present Duchess of Portland. Sargent painted the one, which set all London talking and admiring when it appeared at the Royal Academy a few years ago. The other, less brilliant perhaps but no less radiant, is by the celebrated Hungarian painter, Läzlo, who thought so well of England's cause at the outbreak of the Great War that he became an Englishman by naturalisation.

But there is a better eighteenth century description even than Horace Walpole's of a visit to Welbeck. It came from the pen of Mrs. Delaney, the charming wife of an agreeable, but undistinguished, Irish Dean. She was the close friend and confidante of Lady Oxford's daughter, the second Duchess of Portland, and in her later years lived at Windsor, where George III. and the Princesses used frequently to visit and take tea with her, as readers of Fanny Burney's "Diary" will well remember. Mrs. Delaney was visiting Welbeck for the first time in 1756, and she writes thus to her friend Mrs. D'Ewes :—

"This place is really magnificent, though the outward appearance of the house is by no means amenable to its goodness within. There is a fine lawn before the house, encompassed with woods of the finest oak I ever saw; the park is fine and capable of great improvments, which will soon be set about.

There is a valley of many acres that runs through that part of the park which is visible from the house that is to be floated, and will make a most noble piece of water, a small river runs through it now and they can command as much water as they please. I took a charming walk yesterday, conducted by Lord Edward, who made me observe every beauty and led me whenever I came to any rugged or sloping path with much care and attention, and conversed and entertained me like a man; he is a charming boy and much grown. There was only the Dean with us. The Duke, Duchess, and young ladies dined at Lord Scarbrough's; it was their public day, so we had this great house, Lord Edward, and Mr. Achard to ourselves. In the evening we walked to another wood on the other side of the park, called Cow Close Wood, and round the kitchen garden which is immense. By the time we came in the moon had risen a great height, and D. D. and I sat down in the dining-room to contemplate its glory and to talk of the dear friends who in all likelihood were at that moment admiring its splendour as well as we.

"I don't know how to give you such a description of the house as will make it plain to you; the rooms are numerous, large, and thoroughly well furnished. The two principal rooms are the great dining room, 62 feet long and 27 broad (I think) with a large square projection in the middle that holds the sideboard, and the Gothic Hall, which for workmanship in the true Gothic taste exceeds everything I have seen of the kind. The chapel is to be now built in the same taste. The alterations Lady Oxford made in this place cost above £40,000, and her apartment is the prettiest thing I ever saw, consisting of a skylight ante-chamber or vestibule, adorned in the Gothic way. The rooms that comprise it are a library, a dressing-room, a room filled up with china and japan of the rarest kinds, and a Gothic room full of charming pictures and embellished with everything that can make it look gay and pleasant. It is lighted by a window, something of the Venetian kind, but prettier, and the whole breadth of one side of the room. It is, indeed, an enchanting, pretty room, but never was made use of, for Lady Oxford chiefly sate in her own room or library, which is generally called 'the little west drawing-room' above stairs. This apartment is shut up altogether apart from the rest of the house.

"Upon the whole one may truly say this is a fine place, even to magnificence, but it wants the agreeableness and sweetness

of Bulstrode. Here everything displays the antiquity of the noble race from whence the owners are descended, and the walls are covered with family portraits, but there is a glare of grandeur, and though I admire the Duchess when receiving princely honours and acquitting herself with dignity, I love her best in her own private dressing-room."

There is more information to be gleaned from a gossipy letter like that than from whole chapters of laboured description, and it gives a most agreeable portrait of the second Duchess of Portland, who brought the splendid dower of Welbeck to her husband, the son of King William III.'s favourite, Count Bentinck, who had been created Earl and then Duke of Portland. The first Duke, who had the reputation of being the best keeper of secrets in Europe and to whom Sir William Temple paid the superb compliment that "he was the best and truest servant that ever Prince had the good fortune to possess," had no connection with Welbeck. But his son married the heiress and thus began the association of the Dukes of Portland with Welbeck which has continued to this day. For many years, however, Bulstrode, near Beaconsfield, continued to be the principal seat of the Duke and his successor, for the reason, no doubt, that it was much more convenient for London. The third Duke was the well-known politician who became Prime Minister in 1782 on the death of the Marquis of Rockingham. Charles Greville, himself a grandson of the Duke, gives a curious explanation in his "Diary" how his grandfather came to be selected for that high honour. Greville says that his informant was Sir Robert Adair, who was 85 when he told the tale and remembered the incidents of which he spoke:—

"There was a meeting of the party to choose their chief; the Duke of Richmond put forth his pretensions, but he was so great a Radical (having views of Parliamentary Reform not only far beyond those of any man of that day, but beyond the Reform we have actually got) that they were afraid of him; and Charles Fox got up and said that he thought he, as leader of the House of Commons, had claims at least as good as the Duke of Richmond's, but that they ought both of them to waive their own claims and in his judgment the man they ought to place at their head was the Duke of Portland. This compromise was agreed to, but the Duke of Richmond was so disgusted that he joined Lord Shelburne. My grandfather was a very honourable, high-

minded but ordinary man; his abilities were very second-rate, and he had no power of speaking; and his election to the post of leader of the great Whig party only shows how aristocratic that party was, and what weight and influence the aristocracy possessed in those days; they would never have endured to be led by a Peel or a Canning. Adair told me that old Lord George Cavendish expressed the greatest indignation at their party being led by Burke in the House of Commons."

That passage gives an extraordinary glimpse into the real feelings of the Whig nobles, at whom Disraeli loved to gird as the "Venetian oligarchy." If these were the avowed friends of liberty and progress, it is no wonder that it nearly required a revolution to carry the first Reform Bill. But Greville was rather unduly severe in his estimate of his grandfather's abilities. The third Duke of Portland was not a statesman of the first rank —many who were content to serve under him had much greater abilities than their chief—but no man ever yet became Prime Minister without the possession of solid, if not always brilliant, merit. One of the most interesting features in the library at Welbeck is a collection of letters in the handwriting of every Prime Minister of England from Walpole down to the present day, and the interest of the vast majority of these documents is enhanced by the fact that they were addressed, in nearly every case, to successive Dukes of Portland.

Evidences of the activities of the fifth Duke of Portland are everywhere visible at Welbeck. It was he who built the big riding school and the underground Ball Room, and constructed the long miles of tunnelling, which will always remain one of the "Wonders" of the district. His twin passions were building and privacy, and he built below ground instead of above, which was probably fortunate for the preservation of the amenities of Welbeck. Almost incredible figures are given as to the battalions of workmen whom he kept in constant employment, and of the vast sums which he lavished, but their incredibility vanishes when the extent of the work is seen. The great Ball Room, with its spacious supper rooms, the walls crowded with countless canvases—almost all of which are family portraits—is the most grandiose of the fifth Duke's works, and when seen empty its vast expanse is somewhat depressing from its very magnitude, like the Albert Hall in London or the Coliseum in Rome. But the great Ball Room on state occasions is none too large for the

princely hospitality of Welbeck. Enthusiasm for the tunnels may be left to others. When Dr. Johnson was shown the grand cascade at Chatsworth, he scoffed. "What is a cascade," said he, "to one who has seen the Mediterranean?" What is a tunnel a mile and a half long to one who has been under the Alps? The real wonder of the fifth Duke's exploits is that he so long indulged his insatiate passion for building and yet left Welbeck unspoilt.

Legend-mongers delight in mystery and it is not at all surprising that legends were plentiful in connection with the name of the fifth Duke, in order to account for the supposed moroseness of disposition which led him to avoid the society of his fellow men. They were, indeed, as numerous as they were fantastic. But the most grotesque of all, the legend, namely, that the Duke lived a double life and masqueraded on occasion as Mr. Druce, of the Baker-street Bazaar, was surely the most preposterous fiction that ever deceived a credulous public. The squalid story need not be told anew in these pages. The strange thing was the widespread acceptance which it obtained, right down to the opening of the grave of the real Mr. Druce in Highgate cemetery and the overwhelming exposure in the law courts. Nothing apparently was deemed too outrageous for belief by a section of the public, so long as it was bolstered up by the hard lying of perjured witnesses and the effrontery of an importunate claimant.

When the fifth Duke died in 1879 he was succeeded by his cousin, the sixth and present holder of the title. Eulogy of the living is always out of place, but no one can write at this time of Nottinghamshire and Welbeck without just one word of allusion to the position which the Duke and Duchess of Portland hold in the county. It is not an easy thing to uphold in a democratic age the finest virtues of the aristocratic ideal, but the Duke and Duchess have perfectly succeeded in so doing. They have now for many years led the county in public duty and public spirit, and the outbreak of the Great War redoubled for them the opportunities—always gladly taken—of public service. It may be recalled in that connection that not many months before the Sarajevo assassination, which supplied Austria with the pretext for war against Serbia, the murdered Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his consort spent a few days at Welbeck.

The other beauties of Welbeck, the many gardens—some of which have been designed by the present Duchess—the

great lake which was much enlarged by the fifth Duke; the park, which Celia Fiennes, in the reign of William and Mary, pronounced to be "the noblest wood I ever saw, fine and shapely straight," cannot be described in detail here. But a brief reference must be made to the stables, especially as the corridors in the house are covered with pictures of famous horses, from those which the first Duke of Newcastle rode in the old riding school down to the present day. With Lord George Bentinck and his connection with the Turf we shall deal in the next chapter, but his father, the fourth Duke, was also a well known owner of racehorses in his day and won the Derby with Tiresias in 1819. He drew from old Admiral Rous—long the patriarch of the Turf—the public compliment that he and the fifth Earl of Glasgow were the only men he had known "who raced from a pure disinterested love of sport and without a mercenary thought." The present Duke has also made history on the Turf. The most famous horse he ever owned was St. Simon, whose skeleton, now in the South Kensington Museum, stood for many years in one of the underground rooms near the Ball Room. This St. Simon, a son of Galopin, was bred in 1881, and, like Ormonde, who came later, was never beaten on the race-course. But his racing record was not so complete because, owing to the death of his first owner, he had to be scratched for the Derby. He was then bought by the Duke of Portland, who by good fortune possessed some exceptional mares, and their progeny by St. Simon proved extraordinarily successful. Two of St. Simon's sons, Persimmon and Diamond Jubilee, won the Derby, and his daughters Memoir and La Flêche won the Oaks and the St. Leger. Two other of the Duke's horses, Ayrshire and Donovan, won the Derby in successive years, and in all the Duke won the Oaks four times, with Memoir (1890), Mrs. Butterwick (1893), Amiable (1894), and La Flêche (1900). Amiable also won the One Thousand Guineas. It was a marvellous vein of luck, and its most tangible result may be seen in the beautiful alms-houses, called "The Winnings," which at the Duchess' request the Duke built out of his winnings on the Turf in the three wonderful years, 1888, 1889 and 1890. The vein, of course, worked itself out, and of late fortune seems to have forsaken the Duke's colours, though his horses have three times filled second place for the Derby. But that was ever the way of racing.

CHAPTER XVII

WELBECK LAKE; CARBURTON; CLUMBER

THE high road to Clumber from Welbeck skirts the edge of Welbeck Park as far as the gates near Norton, and soon closely approaches the upper end of the Great Lake. At this point, where a straight road enters on the right, and a charming view opens down to the loch-like water and the slopes of the park beyond, a pleasing monument—a bronze medallion on a freestone column—has been erected by the present Duke of Portland to the memory of his kinsman, Lord George Bentinck. Near here—the precise spot is now covered by the lake—hard by a gate which separated the deer park from a water meadow, a very tragical and distressing circumstance took place. Late in the evening of September 21, 1848, a search party with lanterns discovered Lord George Bentinck lying on his face, with his arms beneath him and one hand still grasping his walking-stick. He had set out at four o'clock that afternoon from Welbeck Abbey to walk to Thoresby, where he was expected to call, and when he failed to arrive, surprise deepened to apprehension, and apprehension to alarm. There was no suggestion whatsoever of foul play, and the verdict of the coroner's jury, though oddly worded, was undoubtedly right—"Died by the visitation of God, to wit, a spasm of the heart."

Thus died one of the most extraordinary men of his generation. His fame is doubly secure. For Disraeli wrote the story of his political career in what still remains the best political biography in the English language, while any history of racing is full of the achievements of one who for six years, from 1839 to 1845, ruled the Turf with a most imperious and autocratic will. Lord George sat for King's Lynn uninterruptedly for

twenty years, and was the last man to appear in the House of Commons in pink. His political creed was simple. He was of the Country Party. He had supported Peel with perfect confidence as the champion of the country interest. When, therefore, Peel, whether rightly or wrongly, changed his principles and accepted Free Trade, Lord George could not follow him. "I keep horses in three counties," he said, "and they tell me I shall save £1,500 a year by Free Trade. I don't care for that. What I can't bear is being sold." But when the country gentlemen pressed him to form a third party of High Protectionists, he curtly said, "I think we have had enough of leaders. It is not my way. I shall remain with the rank and file." And so, no doubt, he meant to do. But circumstances were too strong for him. A leader was wanted and a leader he became, in spite of himself. He who had sat in contented silence for many years suddenly surprised the House by his mastery of the most intricate details of the subjects on which he spoke, and held its close attention for two hours on end, though he had no natural gift for oratory. It was a most remarkable personal triumph. The Country Party, furious with Peel, who with his band of Peelites was keeping the Russell Government in office, followed him gladly, and for chief lieutenant he had at his side the brilliant Disraeli, whose biting invective against Peel had gained him the wondering admiration, but not as yet the confidence of the Tory party. Lord George fell out with his friends, because he was broad-minded and tolerant enough to vote for the removal of Jewish disabilities, and his leadership of the Tory Opposition was very short. He was not cut out for a party leader, and that he was fully aware of his limitations the following letter which he wrote to Croker after his resignation is the best witness :—

"Virtually an uneducated man, never intended or attracted by taste for a political life, in the House of Commons only by a pure accident—indeed, by an undesired and inevitable chance—I am well aware of my own incapacity properly to fill the station I have been thrust into. My sole ambition was to rally the broken and dispirited forces of a betrayed and insulted party, and to avenge the country gentlemen and landed aristocracy of England upon the Minister who, presuming upon their weakness, falsely flattered himself that they could be trampled upon with impunity."

Nevertheless, he felt that he had been treated badly, and in

less than a year he was dead, and the way was left clear for the rapid advancement of Disraeli.

In the library at Welbeck is an autograph copy of "The Life of Lord George Bentinck," given to the present Duke by Disraeli himself, who never forgot the invaluable support which Lord George Bentinck gave to him when he was making his historic attacks on Sir Robert Peel. Of that gratitude a very interesting anecdote is told. When the Duke as a young man succeeded to the title, Lord Beaconsfield, then Prime Minister, invited him to Hughenden and told him that he wished to express in person his abiding sense of obligation to Lord George Bentinck for aiding him to secure the confidence of the country gentlemen of England, who had long been disposed to look very doubtfully on his claim to be their leader. Disraeli, then in the evening of his days, rolled out his stately sentences of thanks to the memory of the man of whom he had written many years before that he "valued life only as a means of fulfilling duty." The story is the more interesting because it was entirely due to the financial assistance which he had received from Lord George Bentinck and his brother that Disraeli had been able to find the purchase money for Hughenden—a fact only recently brought to light in Monypenny and Buckle's "Life of Disraeli." In those days the country gentlemen of England had an inveterate prejudice against being led by anyone who was not of their own class, and there is abundant evidence that Disraeli's principal motive in purchasing Hughenden was his desire to become a country gentleman for the sake of his political career. He had no money of his own at the time—only debts—and it was Lord George Bentinck and the Marquis of Titchfield who enabled him to realise his ambition. His gratitude, therefore, was well founded. Disraeli's brains and extraordinary abilities were all his own, but it was Lord George Bentinck who helped him with the Country Party, when the Earl of Derby and others rather ostentatiously held aloof.

But it is as "Lord Paramount of the Turf" that Lord George is best remembered. His two greatest achievements in that respect were that he cleared the Turf of defaulters and put an end to the innumerable scandals that were occurring in connection with false starts. As for the former, a story is told that a man who owed him £4,000 offered to pay half and the rest in instalments. Lord George turned on him with almost

brutal candour. "You have no right," said he, "to bet if you can't pay. I want £4,000; if you can't pay, you are a defaulter." This was savage, but the evil was rampant, and the cure had to be drastic. The result was that Lord George was more feared than loved, but he was respected and he was greatly admired. A friend of his, Lord Winchilsea, summed him up in the couplet:

> Straight to the point he went, abrupt and dry,
> Tricks he called knavery and a lie a lie.

A sporting contemporary drew his picture thus:—

"A tall, high-bred man, with an air particularly his own, so distinguished yet so essentially of the country, did he seem even amongst the galaxy of patrician sportsmen with whom he was congregated. He had all the eye and complexion of the pure Saxon and the indescribable *air noble* to perfection. His dress at the time greatly added to the charms of his appearance. Dressed in buckskin breeches—none of your Norway does or West Riding imitations, but in the hides of his own stags—with exquisitely made boots of the true orthodox length and antique colouring in top: a buff waistcoat of reddish brown, double breasted coat, ornamented with the buttons of the Jockey Club; a quiet beaver, placed neither at a right angle nor at a left, but in the *juste milieu* of gentlemanly taste, on a well-formed head of auburn hair with large whiskers of the same colour, a starting-flag in his hand and followed by eight and twenty racehorses, like a troop of old Franconi's bearing a tulip bed aloft—so brilliantly shone the silken jackets of the riders in the sun—the observed of a thousand eyes—such did Lord George Bentinck appear as he undertook to start the immense field for the Great Yorkshire Handicap on a plan of his own invention."

That description accurately corresponds with Count D'Orsay's well-known and spirited drawing. Lord George at one time had sixty horses in training, and his Sky-blue and White Cap were familiar on every course. His best horse was Crucifix, which, in 1840, carried off the Two Thousand, the One Thousand and the Oaks, but he never won the Derby, though had Gaper won in 1843—which was Cotherstone's year—he stood to make £150,000. Lord George's decision to give up racing was reached in a flash. While at Goodwood in 1846 he suddenly

turned to Payne, the trainer, with the offer, "The lot for £10,000!" Payne, taken by surprise, said he would give £300 for the option till breakfast time in order to consider it. Next morning he refused. Mr. Mostyn was in the room at the time, and hearing of the offer, tendered Lord George a cheque for the amount. It was taken, and among the horses which then changed owners was the colt Surplice, the winner of the Derby in 1848. The story of how Lord George heard the news of Surplice's victory is too familiar to require re-telling. Disraeli has narrated it in his own incomparable style. His fancy flashed into the splendid but now sadly hackneyed description of the Derby as the Blue Riband of the Turf, and to Disraeli alone would it have occurred to call Lord George's heavy sigh of disappointment and regret at Bellamy's "a splendid groan." The tragic end came soon after and moved all England to sincere regret.

As we continue on our way, the road closely approaches the water, which here bears the name of Carburton Forge Dam. There could hardly be a name less congruous with the surroundings, for the existence of a forge in such a spot is almost unthinkable. Yet this beautiful winding sheet of placid water was originally banked up for the purposes of the forge which stood just by the weir that divides it from Carburton Dam. The last traces of it were removed many years ago by the fifth Duke and its very existence is now forgotten in the neighbourhood. Yet old Pococke describes the Carburton iron works in 1751 as though it were a flourishing industry, and he notes that "the pigs were brought from Derbyshire to be melted into bars for use," and that "the rivulet, I think the Meden, had been bayed up for turning the mills." It was not the Meden, however, but the Poulter. No doubt the plentiful supply of water and timber for fuel explained the selection of the site. Below the weir the lake narrows down between wooded banks and by the time the hamlet of Carburton is reached it resolves itself once more into a prosaic stream. The ancient church of Carburton is a little oblong barn of a place with a small belfry at the west end, a double-faced sundial and a Norman door inside a stuccoed porch. It possesses a register dating from 1528, one of the earliest in England. This tiny rustic chapel affords the quaintest contrast to the costly, elaborate church at Clumber, which presumably has filched away most of its congregation.

A quarter of a mile beyond Carburton we enter the Duke of Newcastle's estate of Clumber. House and church are a long mile distant through the Park, lying to the right from the main road, close to the fine sheet of water into which the river Poulter has once more been teased to make a lake. Clumber is of comparatively recent creation. Before 1770, it was described as "a black heath, full of rabbits, having a narrow river running through it with a small boggy close or two." By 1800, two thousand acres were regularly tilled, and they carried some three or four thousand sheep. To-day it forms a superb park, between ten and eleven miles in circumference, and consisting of about four thousand acres, of which the lake covers eighty-seven. The glory of the park itself is the famous "Duke's Drive," three miles in length, with a double row of lime trees on either side, and each tree apparently the very picture and counterpart of its neighbour. In the spring time, this long curving drive is one of the loveliest things in the whole district, a little monotonous, it is true, to those on foot, but delicious to those who are travelling more rapidly in car or carriage. This drive is a continuation of the road by which we entered Clumber, and issues majestically through noble gates at Apleyhead on the Ollerton and Checkerhouse road.

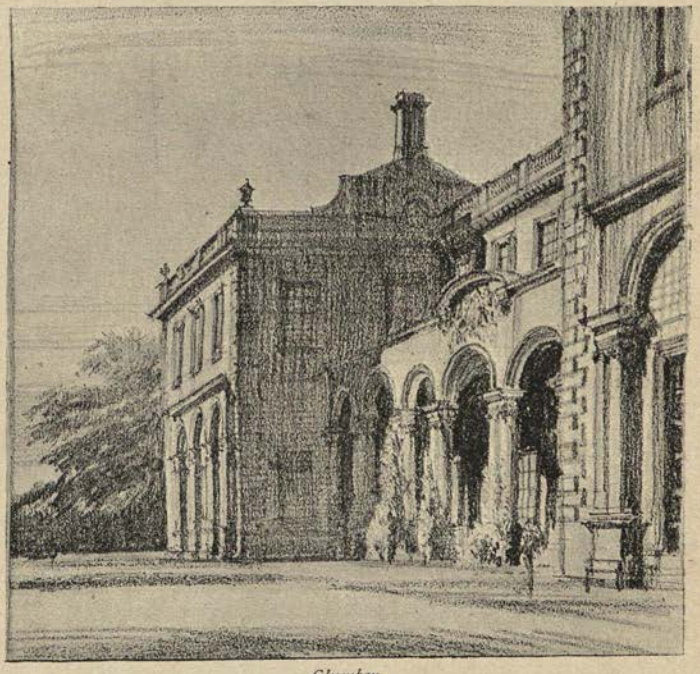
The story of the Clumber estate is of unusual interest. It belonged for a long time to the Holles family, which we shall meet at Haughton, a few miles away, and when John Holles, fourth Earl of Clare, married the heiress of the second Duke of Newcastle, of Welbeck, Clumber and Welbeck were for a time in the same hands. But that period was brief, because again there was only a daughter to inherit, and the Earl of Clare, who had become Duke of Newcastle of the second creation, left Clumber away from his daughter, the Countess of Oxford, and bestowed it on a nephew, who became Duke of Newcastle of the third creation. So Clumber and Welbeck became dissociated once more and have remained so ever since, and the Dukedom of Newcastle, originally connected with Welbeck, has long since passed to Clumber. Nor is this frequency of creation the only source of confusion in the Dukedom of Newcastle. A second unfailing source of error lurks in the title. The first three creations were all of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the third patent was made out with special remainder to the Duke's brother. This brother succeeded, and when, in 1756, it became apparent that the title

would lapse again through default of heirs, the Duke persuaded the King to give him a second Dukedom, that of Newcastle-under-Lyme, with special remainder to the male heir of his sister, who had married the Earl of Lincoln. Thus, from 1756 to his death in 1768, the Duke was Duke both of Newcastle-on-Tyne and of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and though the former Dukedom lapsed the other passed to the Earl of Lincoln, ancestor of the present Duke. In this tangle lies the clue to the many-hyphened family names of the Dukes of Newcastle. The Clare connection brought the name of Holles, then Pelham was added, then the Lincoln connection brought in Fiennes-Clinton, and the family adopted the name of Pelham-Clinton for short.

The most distinguished, politically, of all of these Dukes was he who bore the weight of the double Dukedom—Pelham-Holles, who sat in almost every Cabinet from the time of Walpole till after the great ministry of the elder Pitt. His name became a byword for aristocratic monopoly of office, which fell to him chiefly because he was the most powerful Duke of his day and held the biggest block of votes in the House of Commons. His character has suffered severely because Horace Walpole was his bitter enemy and lost no opportunity of traducing him. " His name is perfidy," wrote Walpole, ridiculing the statesman who was " always in a hurry but always late," and who only discovered, after the news came of its conquest, that Cape Breton was an island. But there is this to be said for the Duke of Newcastle, that though he held the highest ministerial posts for forty years, he left public life £300,000 poorer than when he began it, and he refused a pension from George III. That King once, and once only, encountered a Dean who refused a Bishopric. The Duke of Newcastle was almost certainly the only politician who refused a pension, and who kept his own hands clean, though patronage and bribery were the two main instruments by which he himself conducted the affairs of State.

It was his nephew and successor who built Clumber, and not caring for politics, settled down to the life of a country gentleman. Wright was his architect, and he designed a house consisting of a large central block with four wings. The fire of 1879 destroyed the centre, which was rebuilt by Barry. The present library was added by the fourth Duke, and the state drawing room by the fifth. To the third Duke belongs one of the rarest of all distinctions. It is that, though an ardent sportsman and

the best shot in the county, he permitted any gentleman to shoot on his estate without any other restriction than that imposed by his sense of honour. Moreover, he would never allow a peasant to be prosecuted for a breach of the game laws. Only once did he prosecute a poacher, and that was for snaring hares



Clumber.

in the close season and selling them in Newark market. A sportsman indeed!

The fourth Duke, who succeeded to the estate as a boy of ten in 1795, had the great misfortune, just after leaving school, of being for four years one of Napoleon's *détenus* in France. He returned to England a bitter, implacable Tory, perfectly honest in his vehement convictions, but without a morsel of political discretion. Narrow, dogged, conscientious, but absolutely

impossible, his unpopularity was unbounded. When in 1829 his Newark tenants dared to vote against his candidate, Mr. Sadler, he gave them notice to quit. "It is right," he said, "and no clamour shall turn me from the straight path." So again in 1831, when the same thing happened, his retort was, "I shall raise my rents to the double and see how they like that." "Can't I do what I like with my own?" he cried, to the great joy of the Radicals of his day, who held him up to the execration of the people as the crowning example of aristocratic intolerance. The London mob twice broke the windows of his house in Portman Square; the Nottingham mob burnt his empty mansion, Nottingham Castle, and there were wild threats as to what would happen at Clumber. The Duke was in London when he heard the news, and at once set out for Clumber at four o'clock in the morning. He got home that same evening, and thus records in his Diary what he found on his arrival:—

"I reached Clumber about eleven o'clock, having met vedettes of Yeomanry patrolling within two miles of my house. On my arrival at the house the garrison expressed their rejoicing and welcome by loud and long continued cheers. In the house I found my dear Lincoln, Charles and Thomas, with the officers of the troops stationed there. I could not believe that I was at Clumber: the whole was changed: everything removed that was valuable, such as pictures, ornaments, furniture, statues, etc., and nothing but bare walls, and the house filled with men in all the rooms, with cannons (of which I have ten three-pounders and fourteen little ship guns) fire-arms, muskets and pistols and sabres, planted in their proper positions and in all the windows. . . . Before I went to bed I visited all the arrangements made in the different rooms. . . . In the house there are 200 men, and out of it a great many more, including a troop of yeomanry of 70 men and horses."

Next day the Duke sent away all the Yeomanry, except a sergeant and twelve men, and reduced the garrison from 200 to twenty, for whom he made "a barrack in the offices adjoining." He mounted a chain of sentries round the house at night and had the personal satisfaction of being taken prisoner because he did not know the countersign.

So strongly ran popular feeling against the Duke that even his own friends shunned one who did their side such incalculable harm. He had a genius for quarrelling. Lord John Russell

removed him from the Lord-Lieutenancy of the county for writing an offensive letter to Lord Chancellor Cottenham, and he became estranged from his own family. He never forgave his heir for joining with Peel in his "apostasy" over the Corn Laws, and for years they never saw one another or corresponded. Meanwhile, the Duke, whose complacency led him in 1837 to say, "On looking back to the past I can honestly say that I repent of nothing that I have done," encumbered his estates by making large and reckless purchases of land, including the

Clumber, 1818.
From an engraving by T. Matthews, from a drawing by J. P. Neale.

Worksop estate, which he bought from the Duke of Norfolk for £370,000. And that he was proud of his bargains is shown by the entry in his Diary: "My purchases have amounted altogether in Nottinghamshire within the last two years to not less than £450,000, little short of half a million of money, which is pretty well for one who has no capital at command." Pretty well! It was to a heavily encumbered estate that the fifth Duke succeeded—who, as Earl of Lincoln, had introduced Gladstone to his father's notice when he was "the rising hope of the stern, unbending Tories." His domestic life was clouded by bitter sorrow and terrible scandal—wherein no blame attached to him—and his political career was broken by

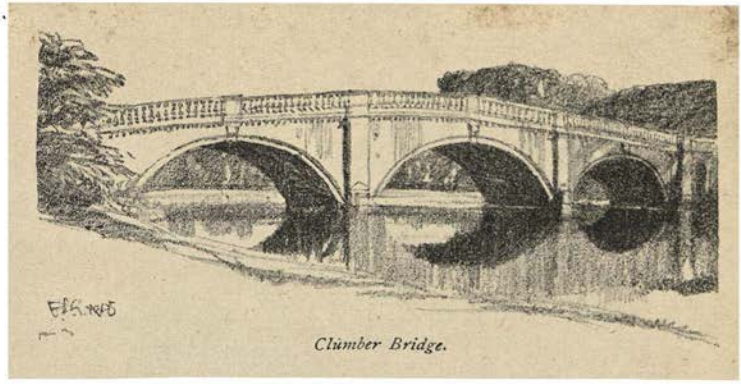
the fact that he was made the scapegoat, as Minister for War, for gross neglect in which the whole of Lord Aberdeen's cabinet was equally responsible. Mr. Gladstone was a frequent visitor to Clumber during these years, for their close friendship lasted down to the Duke's death in 1864. Indeed, he was one of the executors of the Duke's estate, and in an affecting passage written by him to Mrs. Gladstone from Clumber, he describes his regret for his lost friend :—

" So that brave heart has at last ceased to beat. Certainly in him more than in anyone I have known was exhibited the character of our life as a dispensation of pain. This must ever be a mystery, for we cannot see the working out of the purposes of God. Yet in his case I have always thought some glimpse of them seemed to be permitted.

" It is a time and a place to feel if one could feel. He died in the room where we have been sitting before and after dinner —where, thirty-two years ago, I came over from Newark in fear and trembling to see the Duke his father, where a stiff, horse-shoe semi-circle then sate round the fire in evenings ; where that rigour melted away in Lady Lincoln's time ; where she and her mother sang so beautifully at the pianoforte in the same place where it now stands. The house is full of local memories."

Clumber is rich in china, manuscripts, books and pictures. The finest feature of the exterior is the broad Lincoln Terrace, overlooking the lake, the stone of which was brought from Italy about a century ago. Many of the vases and garden ornaments came to Clumber from Worksop, when the fourth Duke purchased that property in 1840.

Clumber church, close by the house, was built by the present Duke in 1889. Of white stone, with red facings from Runcorn, it is a very ornate and elaborate building with a graceful spire, and it is very beautiful, if beauty may consist in the aggregation of rich, costly, and sumptuous adornment. Doubtless, it may. Yet simple things are beautiful, too. The services here are conducted with a ceremonial which consorts with the splendour of the fabric, for the Duke of Newcastle belongs to the most advanced order of the Anglican Church. His mother, the widow of the sixth Duke, who spent the last twenty years of her life in philanthropic work in the East End of London, had herself been a devoted Anglican Catholic prior to her joining the Roman Catholic Church.



Clumber Bridge.

CHAPTER XVIII

THORESBY; PERLETHORPE; CONJURE ALDERS; HAUGHTON

THE road from Clumber to Thoresby is one of the pleasantest in the whole district. Crossing the stone bridge over Clumber Lake, which offers the finest view (accessible to the public) of the house and church in their delightful setting of wood and water, it then rises for a mile over Thorney Hill to the Ollerton Lodge, on the boundary of Clumber Park. The stranger, even if he comes afoot, is apt to be reminded by the locked gates at the lodges that these seeming high-roads are strictly private, and unless the day be one of the "open days," he may suffer the mortification of being turned back. Opposite this lodge are the tall entrance gates into Thoresby Park, and the house itself is about a mile and a half distant by the road, which describes a great sweeping curve before it crosses the public highway from Budby to Perlethorpe. This bisects Thoresby Park from west to east and passes near the house.

Thoresby is the estate of Earl Manvers, and while his splendid park in no way falls behind those of Welbeck and Clumber, the adjacent woodlands of Birklands and Bilhalgh, which lie outside the park proper, are easily the finest, not merely in Sherwood, but in the whole of England. Thoresby Lake, too, formed by the river Meden, is a nobler sheet of water than its rivals. The house, which is not shown to the public, is a modern building and architecturally of no great interest—a fine mansion and there an end. It was built in 1868 to take the place of a typically Georgian predecessor—"a comfortable house rather

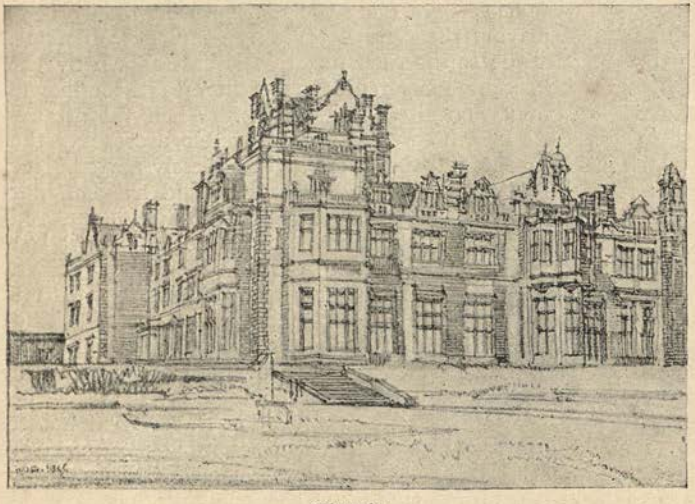
than a magnificent seat," to quote a century-old description—which itself was built on the site of an earlier house destroyed by fire in 1745, soon after its completion. Peter Tillemans engraved a large plate of the second Thoresby House, which displayed its noble owner, the Duke of Kingston, in the foreground, surrounded by his pointers and shooting his birds, with all his stars blazing on his breast to dazzle and console their dying eyes. Mrs. Delaney, who came over to see Thoresby from Welbeck in 1756, says that it was "reputed to be the finest place in this country, but in my opinion falls very short. I think it not to compare to Welbeck—I mean the park. It is twice as large, but the ground does not lie so well, nor are the woods so fine." But then Mrs. Delaney was prejudiced in favour of anything belonging to her dear friend, the Duchess of Portland. The usual verdict of the eighteenth century, however, was in favour of Thoresby. "This park excels the others much in beauty," wrote Sir Harbottle Grimston, in 1768, "having a very good turf, which in this country is much wanting." "I don't wonder," wrote Walpole in 1777, "that Lord Ossory preferred Thoresby to the three old Dukeries. So did I, and did not admire it much either. . . . Merry Shirwood is a trist region and wants a race of outlaws to enliven it, and a Duchess Robin Hood has run her country it has little chance of recovering its ancient glory." We shall see presently the meaning of the allusion to "Duchess Robin Hood." Meanwhile, it is to be observed that the present Thoresby House does not occupy the site of the old one, which was a quarter of a mile further south, approached by the noble beech avenue from the Buck Gates, on the Ollerton side of the park.

The family name of the owners of Thoresby is Pierrepont, and the Pierreponts have played a prominent part in the affairs of the county for many a long generation, though rarely rising to very high distinction. A Henry "Pierpont" was Knight of the Shire in 1416, and the name recurs at frequent intervals both in the list of members for the town, as well as of the county, of Nottingham, down to the time of the family's ennoblement. Holme Pierrepont, near Nottingham, was for centuries their principal home; the little church there is full of their monuments, and it was the second son of Sir Henry Pierrepont, of Holme Pierrepont, who first became Earl of Kingston-upon-Hull in the reign of Charles I. When the war broke out, the

Pierreponts were hopelessly divided among themselves. Colonel William Pierrepont was a strong Parliamentarian; his elder brother, Lord Newark, was a violent Cavalier. Their father, the Earl of Kingston, desired to stand neutral and would gladly have joined a middle party, had there been one to join. Mrs. Hutchinson says of him that he was "a man of vast estate, and no less covetous, who divided his soul between both parties and concealed himself, till at length his fate drew him to declare himself absolutely on the King's side, wherein he behaved himself honourably and died remarkably." Why "remarkably," it may be asked? The answer is that the manner of his death fulfilled to the letter an imprecation which he himself had uttered but a short while before. "When I take arms," he had said, "with the King against the Parliament, or with the Parliament against the King, let a cannon-bullet divide me between them." And a cannon-bullet did. The Earl declared for the King and was present in Gainsborough when that town was captured by Lord Willoughby of Parham. His captors put him in a boat to be taken down the Trent to Hull, and some Royalist troops on the bank fired a shot at the pinnace, with the result that the ball hit the Earl in the middle, and literally cut him in two. Such was the fate of the first Earl of Kingston in 1643. His eldest son was created Marquis of Dorchester by Charles I. in 1645, and steadfastly followed the King's fortunes throughout the Civil War. He could do so with the better confidence that even if the King's cause went down in ruin he would not be too heavily punished by his adversaries, because his own brother, William, stood high in Cromwell's favour. This brother, who was known in his family as "Wise William," was a powerful man with his master, and letters of his are preserved at Welbeck—his daughter Frances married the eldest son of the first Duke of Newcastle—strongly advising his son-in-law to pay every mark of respect to the Protector.

After the war the Marquis of Dorchester went up to London to live because, as he said, "every mechanic in the country thought himself as good as the greatest peer." He was a man of quarrelsome disposition—he and his son-in-law once came to blows in public and tore one another's wigs—and he also offended the sense of dignity of many of his brother Peers by taking to the study of medicine, and becoming a Fellow of the College of Physicians. His foible was to physic his friends,

who were not always as grateful as he thought they should be for the pills which he thrust upon them. It was his son, the second Marquis of Dorchester—George I. made him Duke of Kingston in 1715, because of his loyalty to the Hanoverian succession in that critical year of Jacobite insurrection—who was the father of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. That once famous lady spent a good deal of her girlhood at Thoresby in her father's company, and very chilly company it seems to have been. Yet he



Thoresby.

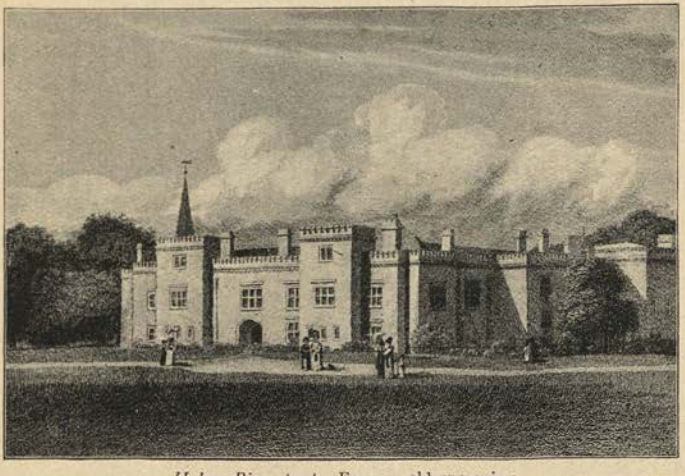
was proud of her, for, when she was a child of seven, the Marquis nominated her as a toast at the Kit Cat Club. The other members insisted on her being sent for, and the child was fetched in her best dress. Then her health was drunk and her name engraved on a glass. This, of course, took place in London; she found life rather tedious at Thoresby—which she never mentioned in her later letters—and being of a studious and literary turn of mind she struck up a romantic attachment with Mr. Edward Wortley, of Wharncliffe Chase, who was many years older than herself. It started through a sentimental correspondence with his sister, though the latter's epistles seem to have been

largely dictated by her brother. The courtship which followed forms one of the most curious love stories of the early eighteenth century. When Wortley grew as jealous as his cold phlegmatic temper would allow, because someone else had taken Lady Mary to Nottingham races, she hotly replied :—" To be capable of preferring the despicable wretch to Mr. Wortley is as ridiculous, if not as comical, as forsaking the Deity to worship a calf." But though capable of occasional spasms of jealousy Wortley was a desperately calm lover, a model of formal propriety, given to reproof when he thought Lady Mary was growing too worldly, and fond of playing the censor. However, the lady liked it, or pretended to do so, and her devotion is best shown by the fact that she accepted his reproofs and flew to the opposite excess of a gravity unsuited to her years. When the attachment was made known to the Marquis, trouble arose over the marriage settlement, and the lovers were ruthlessly parted. Nor was that all. Her father busied himself to find his daughter another husband, and when at length he produced one and sought to enforce her acceptance, there was nothing for it but an elopement. So the formal and priggish Mr. Wortley was in honour bound to make the necessary arrangements for a carrying-off, just as any reckless young rake might have done, and in 1712 this odd pair began their married life with a runaway marriage. The Marquis, of course, was furious, and nursed his resentment for many years.

Of Lady Mary's subsequent career, of her travels in the east, of her literary friendships and antipathies in London, and of her successful efforts to introduce into England the system of inoculation against small-pox, which she found in use in Turkey, we need not speak here, for her connection with Thoresby ceased at her marriage. Nor, to tell the truth, is it easy to take much interest in either Lady Mary Wortley Montagu or her letters, which are ridiculously overpraised, compared with those of many other clever women writers of her century. The most amusing story of Lady Mary at Thoresby is that told by her descendant, Lady Louisa Stuart, when she describes how, as a young girl, Lady Mary had to carve for all her father's guests on his public days, and took lessons in the art of carving three times a week, so that she might attain perfection. It is added that on these occasions " she was forced to eat her own dinner an hour or two beforehand," else she would never have had

an opportunity of getting a mouthful, so busily were her talents kept employed for her father's hungry guests.

The Dukedom of Kingston came to an end with the death of the second Duke in 1773. He was described by Walpole as "a very weak man of the greatest beauty and the finest person in England." He has two claims to remembrance. One is that he raised locally the troop of horse, known as the Kingston Light Horse, which served under the "butcher" Cumberland at Culloden in the Forty-Five, and the other is that he was the husband of



Holme Pierrepont. From an old engraving.

the "Duchess Robin Hood," as Walpole called her, the notorious and bigamous Duchess of Kingston. Her story is one of the most romantic in the history of the British Peerage. The only daughter of Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, of a good Devonshire family, Elizabeth was born in 1724 and as a girl was maid of honour to Augusta Princess of Wales. In 1744, while staying with an aunt at Winchester, she met a gallant young lieutenant of H.M.S. Cornwall, by name Augustus Hervey. They fell in love, and a secret marriage took place at the church of Lainston, near Winchester, at eleven o'clock at night. Only the parson, the bride and bridegroom, the bride's aunt and maid, and a friend

of the lieutenant, with a lighted taper in his hat, were present at the ceremony, and a little later Hervey sailed off in his ship and was away for two years. Then he returned, and he and his wife lived together. A child was born and died in infancy, but in 1747 the pair separated and did not meet again. Years passed and, in 1759, the papers announced that Lord Bristol was seriously ill and not expected to recover. As all those who had stood between Lieutenant Hervey and the title at the time of his marriage had died in the interval, Elizabeth saw that there was every prospect of her husband becoming Earl of Bristol. So she went down to Winchester, and with the connivance of the parson, concocted a bogus register of the Lainston marriages, because her own had not been entered in the parish register. Lord Bristol, however, recovered and it was the Lainston parson who shortly afterwards died.

Elizabeth at that time was leading a very gay, not to say fast, life, to the scandal of a great world which was none too squeamish about the proprieties. She set all the tongues wagging by her extremely décolletée appearance at a masked ball at Ranelagh in 1749 in the character of Iphigenia, and by her flagrant *liaison* with Evelyn, second Duke of Kingston, then a man of mature years. Elizabeth was Duchess in all but name; she acted as hostess at the Duke's entertainments at Kingston House, and this continued for so long that she began at last to scheme how she might become Duchess in reality. So in 1768 she opened up correspondence with her husband, Hervey, in order to get rid of their marriage. Hervey offered a collusive divorce, until he discovered that, if successful, he would have been responsible for his wife's debts, which amounted to £16,000. So it was arranged that there should be a suit for jactitation of marriage. The lady brought the action with sublime effrontery and she won it. The Ecclesiastical Court pronounced her "a spinster," and she triumphantly married the Duke of Kingston, at St. George's, Hanover-square, to the astonishment of all London. Five years later the Duke died, leaving her absolutely everything he could, and utterly disinheriting his eldest nephew, Evelyn Meadows. About the same time the Earl of Bristol also died and Elizabeth Duchess of Kingston thus really became Countess of Bristol. In 1775 the law was again set in motion, and in spite of the previous verdict of the Ecclesiastical Court a warrant was issued for her arrest on a charge of bigamy. The

trial took place at Westminster. The Crown produced the maid who had been present at the secret wedding and also Dr. Cæsar Hawkins, who had acted as go-between in the negotiations between Hervey and Elizabeth. When found guilty of bigamy, she promptly pleaded her rank as Countess in order to avoid being branded in the hand, and the easy sentence of the Court was, "Madam, you are discharged on paying your fees." So Elizabeth went off to St. Petersburg and became for a time the bosom friend of the Empress Catherine. What a pair! The stories of their past *episodes galantes*, as each poured forth her copious stream of confidence, must have beguiled even a long Russian winter. The Duchess died in 1788 at the age of 63, and the story goes that just before the end she was raised up in her bed, drank off two glasses of Madeira, and so cheerfully expired.

Such was the end of the Duchess of Kingston, and with her end in mind it is amusing to remember the canting motto of the Pierreponts—*Pie repone te*. Thanks to her intrigues, the Duke had disinherited his eldest nephew and had left the estates to his sister's second son, Charles Meadows, who took the name of Pierrepont, sate in Parliament for the county, and was created successively Baron Pierrepont, Viscount Newark, and in 1806 Earl Manvers. It was the theory of those days—as propounded by Pitt—that any man with a landed property of £10,000 a year had a just claim to a peerage, and so what had been frequently done at Clumber was repeated at Thoresby.

The second Lord Manvers, grandfather of the present Earl, is still affectionately remembered and spoken of in the county as "the old Lord." A good many stories cluster round his name. Dean Hole, in one of his gossipy papers, drew a picture of him as he was known to members of the Rufford Hunt away back in the 'sixties of last century. He speaks of him as "the most considerate of landlords, the most generous of benefactors to the poor and sick, and the kindest and truest of friends." And then he goes on to say:—

"I have never since seen such a charming turn-out, an equipage so *comme il faut*, as that in which he came to the meet, an open carriage with four grand sixteen-hand horses, ridden by postilions in cherry-coloured jackets, buckskins and black velvet caps, with two outriders. He could say a severe thing when a knave or a fool required it, but he was a delightful companion in his normal state; always a munificent supporter of the hunt, he was

not a prominent rider; in fact, he preferred the *fallentis semita vitae*, and followed in the wake of the hounds, far from the madding crowd. If he met with obstacles which seemed to him unduly obtrusive, Robert, a favourite groom, got off his horse and removed them. One day a timid stranger, admiring this way of hunting made easy, attached himself as equerry and followed through the gaps, until the Earl, turning towards him with a solemn curtsey, said, as he raised his hat, "I am quite sure, sir, that you are not aware that for many years I have

Thoresby in 1819.
From an engraving by Hobson, from a drawing by J. P. Neale.

enjoyed in this hunt the exclusive privilege of being last, and I know that I have only to inform you of this fact to secure your respect for my claim."

About half a mile from the great house, across the Meden's pretty stream on the edge of the park, and in a perfect situation, is the fine modern church of Perlethorpe. This was built by the third Earl Manvers on the site of an older fabric, which, as a flat stone in the churchyard records, had been restored by his ancestor, the Duke of Kingston, in 1743. Its main feature is a beautiful spire, rising to 128 feet from a slender

tower, and the woodwork of the interior is all of oak grown in the forests close at hand. The third Earl—"kindest of friends and most just of masters," to quote from his memorial in the chancel—was a very liberal benefactor to the various churches on his estates. There are some noble yew trees in the well-tended churchyard.

While we are at Perlethorpe it is convenient to make a little détour which not one visitor in ten thousand thinks of making, but which is full of ancient historical interest. Pass out of the park and keep straight on into the old high-road from Ollerton to Blyth. Turn to the left along this and, crossing the Meden, reach the cross-roads near the Shepherd's Lodge into the park on your left. Take the by-road to the right which leads towards Bothamsall, and in a quarter of a mile opposite a solitary tree on your left hand, pass through the gate on your right into a narrow strip of grassy lane. Follow this round a bend to the left, pass through another gate, and keep the track along the hedge to two wooden bridges over the Meden. The place is now called Conjure Alders, but the ford over the Meden, now superseded by these bridges, bore the ancient Saxon name of Coningeswath, or the King's Ford. It was from this spot that the old perambulations of Sherwood Forest always began. The fragment of grassy lane is a survival of what beyond question is one of the most ancient roads in the county, the road on the extreme eastern edge of the forest to and from Wellow, which was superseded in later years by the Ollerton high-road.

For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the official perambulation records, I quote the following description from a record made in the reign of Charles II. Despite its heroic defiance of grammar and punctuation, it is a document of great interest to students of place names and ancient roads, and a well-equipped pedestrian might profitably spend a long summer's day in trying to follow the route by the help of an Ordnance map :—

"And so descends to the fore-named water of Mayden and so turneth eastward by and after the said water into Coneswath Ford, which is at Haughton Park side and so returneth from the said ford, following the old hie street of Blith, which is a way that leadeth from Nottingham to Blith by Haughton Park side, and followeth the same hie street to a place called White

Water and so along the said street, leaving Boughton Fields on the east part and Ollerton Fields and the towne on the west part and so Blith street lane, which goeth up to Mellow alias Melleigh, and there it is crossed with a way which goeth from Newark to Warsopp, and there it entereth into the Demesnes of Rufford at Welleye Gapp, and still proceedeth by an old lane crossing a great way leading from Kneesal to Mansfield by Reven Grange, leaving it on the east and leaving Welleye also on the east, and then near unto Blackstone Hall, now called Southfellers, leaving the old park on the east, and proceedeth along by the said park to the way that goeth to Nottingham, between Shire Oakesfield and the brook that runneth into Rufford Dam, and so along the said highway between the fields of Bilesthorpe and Wintersfield, and then to an old ditch which is the outside of the boundaries of Rufford on the east, until it come to a stone, called the Abbot's Stone, which is the partition between the grounds of the Abbot of Rufford and of the Archbishop of York and so it extendeth itself southward, till it come over against Darton Grange, allwayes keeping the way, turning a little westward until it come to the river of Dorbeck, the which said great way goeth toward Nottingham and which river of Dorbeck, where the said great way goeth over it is near adjoining to a place called Driesicke and near the highway which leadeth from Oxen to Blidworth down from Heywood, and so descendeth directly under Dorcliffe and then to Salterford Inn, and from thence in a direct line to Oxen Milne, and down to Epperstone Milne, and so to Grimes Moore (where the water was anciently wont to runn) and so from Grimes Moore down to Woodborow Milne, and to Lowdham Milne, and so to Gunaston Milne and from thence to Lowdham Milne and so to Baker's Milne and so down into Nottingham Milne, and thence to Cathorpp Milne and so, as the river was wont to run in ancient times into the river of Trent, directly over against a place where a milne stood on the south side Trent, in the Lordship of East Bridgeford and from thence it ascendeth up the river of Trent unto the Abbey or mansion of Shelford, so that the said Abbey is without the forest and from thence, etc., to Nottingham Bridge, alias Holl-beth Bridge, alias Hellibeth Bridge, where it began, so endeth."

The path along the bank of the Meden is plentifully adorned with emphatic notice-boards, so those who would not trespass

will return to the road, and passing through the dull little village of Bothamsall will look for a by-road on the right half a mile further on, which crosses the Meden and continues down to its twin river the Maun. Then, a little to the left, in the narrow space between the two streams, you will soon see Haughton Hall Farm, which stands on the site of a great mansion, once as famous throughout the Midlands as Welbeck is to-day. It had been a place of importance for centuries before it passed into the hands of the Holles family. The Longvillers and the Maulovels had kept state there, and after them the Stanhopes. But in the reign of Henry VIII. it was bought by Sir William Holles, Lord Mayor of London, who had made a handsome fortune as a baker. He rebuilt Haughton in 1545 with great magnificence, and though the situation is hardly one which would be chosen to-day it was specially praised by one of his near descendants as "a seat both pleasant and commodious, lying between the Forest and the Clay, and so partaking of the sweet and wholesome air of the one and the fertility of the other, having the river Idle running through it by several cuts in several places"—a passage which shews that one of the twin channels of the Meden and Maun is artificial. Under the new *régime* and that of his son, "the good Sir William," the fame of Haughton spread far and wide. Its hospitality became proverbial. Christmas used to begin at Haughton at All Hallowtide and there were twelve days of continual feasting. One fat ox a day with muttons and poultry in proportion was the allowance, and anyone who chose might stay three days with a welcome and no questions asked. Sir William never dined until one o'clock in the day, because, as he said, there might be a friend on his way to see him from twenty miles off, and he was loth that he should lose his labour. At the coronation of Edward VI. he arrived in London with a band of fifty retainers in their coats and badges, and he never appeared at Retford Sessions "without 30 proper fellows at his heels." Every day he walked round his park for exercise, and so he lived, as he deserved to do, to the grand old age of eighty-three. He died in 1590, and it was his grandson who ennobled the family.

He did it by purchase. James I. wanted money and was always open to sell a peerage at a price. Holles did not like the principle of the thing; indeed, he called it "temporal

simony." But then, said he, "seeing the market open and finding his purse not unfurnished for it, he was persuaded to wear his money as other men had done," and not liking to see others advanced over his head, he paid the Crown £10,000 in cash for the Barony of Clare in 1616, and in 1624 put down another £5,000 and bought an earldom. That he was a fit and proper person to be ennobled is not in dispute. In his youth he had fought as a volunteer against the Armada and in the Azores expedition of 1597, and had borne arms in Hungary against the Turk. James had made him Comptroller to the Household of Henry, Prince of Wales, whom he entertained at Haughton, the prince whose untimely death changed the current of English history. But he was not a favourite at Court, for, as some one said, there were two sorts of men the Scottish Solomon had never kindness for, "those whose hawks and dogs ran as well as his own, and those who were able to speak as much reason as himself." So the Earl of Clare was often under a cloud, and in 1629 was actually prosecuted before the Star Chamber for being concerned in the circulation of Sir Robert Dudley's papers of advice for the establishment of absolute monarchy in England, and had to make submission to Charles I. and beg for the Royal smile at Rufford.

He died at Nottingham in 1637, before the outbreak of the troubles, and was succeeded by his son, the second Earl, whose character was aptly summed up by Lucy Hutchinson in the phrase, "He was very often of both parties and never advantaged either." He changed sides not once but twice. At the outset he leaned to the Parliament. Then, when the royal cause seemed winning before Marston Moor, he went over to the King, but changed yet again when it became evident that the cause was lost. His brother, Denzil Holles, was made of much more decisive stuff, for he was one of those who held down the Speaker in the Chair while the House of Commons passed its famous resolutions, and one of the five whom the King madly sought to arrest at Westminster. Yet even he lived to repent the effects of the storm which he had helped to create, and turned into a bitter opponent of Cromwell and Ireton. He once challenged the latter to go over the water and fight a duel with him. Ireton replied that his conscience would not permit him to do so. Whereupon Holles in choler pulled him by the nose and said that if his conscience kept him from giving men satisfaction,

it should also keep him from provoking them. Then he sought a voluntary expatriation which brought him into touch with Charles in Holland, and the result was a barony for himself when the King came to his own again. The third Earl of Clare lived through the reign of William and Mary as a strong Protestant and Whig, and it was his eldest son John who married the heiress of the Cavendishes at Welbeck, and was himself raised to the Dukedom of Newcastle in 1694. That was the end of the great days of Haughton. The lesser dignity became swallowed up in the greater. The Holles' dignities and estates were merged in those of the Cavendishes. Haughton was abandoned for Welbeck and fell into disrepair. Yet the union of the two estates was not of long endurance. For as has been shown elsewhere, the new Duke left no heir, but only a daughter, and while Welbeck passed to the Portlands, the Holles estates went to the Pelhams, who became the Dukes of Newcastle of another creation.

So much for the family of Holles. But we cannot quit Haughton without telling the story of the duel between Sir John Holles, before he became a peer, and Gervase Markham. It would take too long to describe how the feud arose, but the sum of the matter was that one of Holles' personal attendants was done to death by the Markham faction, and Holles wrote and challenged Markham to fight. The latter accepted the challenge, but stipulated that the encounter should take place in Worksop Park, where lived his powerful patron, the Earl of Shrewsbury. To this Holles replied that he certainly would not trust himself in such a dangerous place, implying that he feared foul play. So the matter dropped. But not long afterwards a christening party took place at Haughton in honour of the infant Denzil, and Lady Stanhope, Sir John's mother-in-law, had come over from Shelford for the ceremony. She was returning home through the forest with her son-in-law as escort, when suddenly they met Gervase Markham and a party of his friends coming the other way. The two enemies glared at one another but no words passed. But in a little while Sir John took leave of his mother-in-law and then turned and galloped to overtake Markham. He soon came up with him, and observing how unworthily he had been dealt with, alighted and drew his sword. Markham did the same, and the duel began.

"I have heard him say that upon the first encounter he used

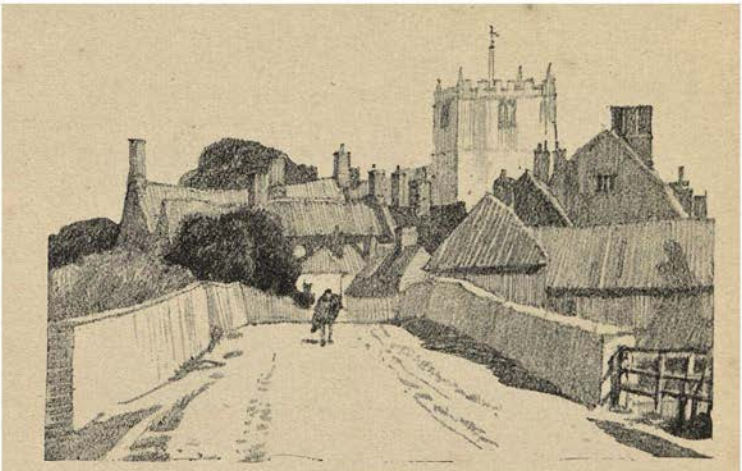
these words, 'Markham, guard yourself better, or I shall spoil you presently' (for he said he laid as open to him as a child), and the next pass he run him through the middle, up to the hilt, and out behind towards the small of the back. With this wound Markham fell, and was carried off the ground by those of his company, while Sir John Holles, with his servant, Ashton, and a groom, who only were with him, returned to Haughton. The news coming to the Earl of Shrewsbury, he immediately raised his servants and tenants, to the number of 120, with a resolution to apprehend Sir John Holles as soon as he knew that Markham's wound was fatal; which Edmund Lord Sheffield understanding, he speedily repaired to Haughton, with three score in his retinue out of Lincolnshire, to assist his cousin germain in case the Earl should attempt anything. An old servant of Sir John Holles told me he was present when the Lord Sheffield came and that his master, going forth to meet him, he asked him how it was with Markham. He replied that he thought the greatest danger was he had spoiled his gallantry. 'I hear, cousin,' says the Lord Sheffield, that my Lord of Shrewsbury is prepared to trouble you; take my word, before he carry you, it shall cost many a broken pate,' and he went in and remained at Haughton until they had certain account that Markham was past danger; who indeed recovered, and lived after to be an old man, but never after ate supper or received sacrament, which two things he rashly vowed not to do until he was revenged."

It is said that the two combatants never met again but once. That came about, many years later, in a curious way. For Markham happened to be robbed of the sum of £5,000, and £2,000 of this was found hidden in Gonalston Woods. These woods belonged to Sir John Holles, then Earl of Clare, and the money was brought to him, because it escheated to him as lord of the fee, the money being "felon's goods." The Earl, as an honourable man, returned it to Markham, and Markham, "who curst and swore like a beggar" at finding himself under an obligation to his enemy, was obliged to go to Haughton and acknowledge the civility and honesty of his mortal foe.

Nothing remains of all the grandeur of Haughton save only the ruins of the chapel, a quarter of a mile further along the bank of the Maun. It is well worth a visit, for the ruins stand in the middle of a little grove—very forlorn and neglected and desolate,

yet with much still left to interest the curious. The original chapel was of Norman construction, but large additions were evidently made in the palmy days of Haughton's splendour. The belfry for two bells is still standing, and those who tread down the nettles in the mouldering nave and brush aside the thick tangle of wild growth, may find abundant fragments of sculptured tombstones and still distinguishable effigies of bygone greatness—bygone even when the first Sir William Holles came here to worship. As you enter the Norman door, you step over the remains of rather ghastly effigies cut deep in their solid tombstones, which look as if their throats had been slashed across. Hence the absurd local legend that all who were buried in Haughton Chapel first had their throats cut.

Clumber, from the Terrace.



Ollerton.

CHAPTER XIX

OLLERTON ; RUFFORD ; EAKRING ; EDWINSTOWE ; CLIPSTONE

OLLERTON is picturesquely situated on the edge of the Forest, from which it is divided by a narrow belt of low-lying fields, and the placid waters of the Maun. The builder, fortunately, has not yet crossed the bridge, and half the charm of the place lies in the preservation of this open strip. Ollerton itself is of small importance. The streets are narrow and the houses commonplace, though they cluster prettily enough round the church, which crowns the rising ground in the centre, and thus, at a distance, acquires a dignity which vanishes on closer inspection. For Ollerton church is a poor structure both without and within. The battlemented tower is squat and clumsy, and though it has bells and a chiming clock, the chimes are grotesquely out of tune. The only feature of historical interest in the plain, barn-like interior is a stone tablet on one of the walls which bears the inscription, "Thomas Markham, sonne and heir of George Markham, who disceased May 22, 1643." That is the sole memorial of the once famous family of the Markhams of Ollerton.

These Markhams lived at Ollerton Hall, a substantial red-brick house, a hundred yards or so from the church, its garden

pleasantly bordered by the Maun. The exterior of the present building obviously does not date back beyond the eighteenth century, but the records are lost, and it is not known when it replaced the older house built by the George Markham mentioned on the memorial tablet in the church. At present part is used as a branch of the Rufford Estate offices, and only a small portion facing the street is inhabited. The rest stands empty. Originally, and before the present road was made, the main entrance was at the back, where the stables now are, and an avenue of trees, slanting through the old grounds, shaded the approach from the Newark road. From the leads on the flat roof—so tradition says—the young wife of Thomas Markham saw the sad procession which brought home her gallant husband mortally stricken—other accounts say that he was drowned in the Trent—after Gainsborough fight. The tablet in the church shrouds rather than reveals the story, for no one casually reading the oddly spelt word "disceased" would suspect that the dead man was one of the victims of the Civil War. But so it was. Young Markham was a Royalist and the story goes that he was with Colonel Charles Cavendish in the fatal fight near Gainsborough. If that be so, the date on the tablet is wrong, for the Battle of Gainsborough was not fought until July 28 of that year. But there had been much skirmishing all round Newark and Gainsborough during the spring, and perhaps it was in one of these unrecorded contests that Markham fell. With him the Markhams of Ollerton seem to have become extinct in the male line.

But the main interest of Ollerton with most of its visitors lies in its inn. Happy the townlet which has a good inn. That is Ollerton's chief distinction, and it recalls the days when some of the fastest coaches ran this way, leaving the Great North Road at Newark and taking the forest road through Ollerton to Worksop, and rejoining the main highway near Doncaster. But for those coaches there certainly would have been no such inn in Ollerton as the Hop Pole, whose long, red-brick front so bravely faces the white forest road. To some inns the heart warms at once, so sound they look, so satisfying, so soberly cheerful to the eye. The Hop Pole is one of their number, and it adequately fulfils the promise of its exterior. For a long mile, as you come down the road from Worksop, it beckons its genial invitation, and you must have good and sufficient reason if

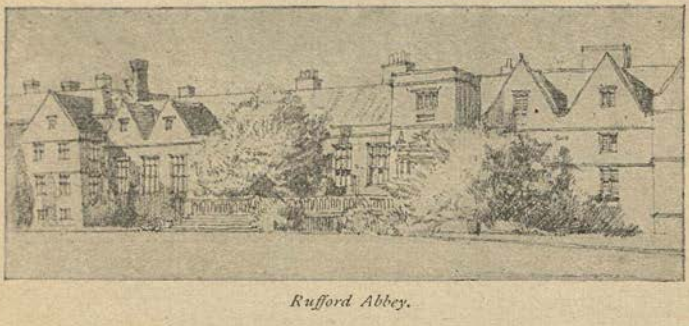
you can bring yourself to make the bold swerve required to pass it by. The Hop Pole was never famous in the coaching days, like the Bell at Barnby Moor, for, after all, comparatively few coaches took the forest route. It has no recorded history. No one seems to know when it was built, and it has been altered a good deal in comparatively recent times, though so skilfully that the symmetry of the exterior has not been injured. Nevertheless, it has long been honourably known in the Midlands, and of late motorists have spread its fame over a much wider circle. The house is full of odd things, but its most individual possession is a huge copper vessel, which bears the inscription, "The Ollerton Hop Pole Inn Club Can. June 5, 1796. Seven quarts." All memory of the club which used this can has vanished, but it probably consisted of the principal residents, who met every week or month to dine and spend a social evening. Maybe they were seven in number and the allowance was a quart apiece, for seven quarts is a measure that does not figure in the tables. However, the club has gone the way that all clubs go sooner or later, and the great can keeps its secret close.

Throsby, the antiquary, summed up the interest of Ollerton in a sentence as far back as 1797. "The church," said he, "is small and newly built, consequently no food there for the mind of the antiquary; but at the Hop-Pole, near the church, I have more than once, after journeying from village to village, completely tired, found comfortable refreshment for the body." So, too, William Bray, the traveller who, in 1783, referred to Ollerton as "the little town with a good inn in it." The hop-fields for which all this part of the county used to be famous have long since disappeared, and the Hop Pole is the sole surviving reminder of a once flourishing industry. The little mill on the bridge, plain enough in front, but picturesque at the back, is by far the oldest thing in Ollerton.

Two miles to the south of Ollerton is Rufford Abbey, which, though not actually included in the Dukeries, is their most worthy and beautiful neighbour. Like Welbeck, it has an ancient monastic history, and though the park and the lake are small compared with those of Welbeck, Clumber and Thoresby, Rufford has a magical charm of its own which is denied to them. It is not so much a palace as a glorious country house, which Time never touches save with a caressing hand. That is the first impression one receives on entering the short

avenue of venerable limes leading from the pelican-crowned entrance on the road to Nottingham, or from the delightful footpath on the other side of the lake. It is more than confirmed by closer view. An Elizabethan house with many later but still quite congruous additions, a long and rather low front of rosy tinted stone and a pleasing irregularity of design, surrounded by beautiful gardens which themselves are ringed round with fine woods and spacious park—such is Rufford Abbey.

The Cistercian Abbey was founded in 1148 by Gilbert de Gaunt, Earl of Lincoln. An offshoot of Rievaulx in Yorkshire, it pursued its quiet way for nearly four centuries, making little noise either in the political or the religious world, and thereby



Rufford Abbey.

best fulfilling the intention of its founder. At its suppression the net revenues amounted to £176 11*s.* 6*d.*—a little more than Newstead, but less than Beauvale, Worksop, Welbeck and Thurgarton—and Henry VIII. made a grant of them to George Earl of Shrewsbury, who doubtless received them with becoming gratitude. Some years later, the famous Countess of Shrewsbury began to convert the monastic buildings into a residence more to her taste. Practically all that she left of the old Abbey was the refectory, now used partly as a servants' hall and partly as a wine cellar, a long vaulted apartment supported by round pillars. The Countess built the Elizabethan mansion, while the stately Stuart wing, beyond the great Elizabethan hall, was added by the famous Marquis of Halifax, known to English History as "The Trimmer." The old minstrels' gallery in the hall is now screened off from the rest, and that end is used as a

passage, but it is to be noticed that the original entrance was on the other side of the building and the present entrance is of much later date. The best rooms in the house are the long, narrow drawing-room, once used only as a picture gallery, the library, and the large dining-room which is distinguished by a series of fine historical portraits. Here is Lord Strafford by Van Dyck, a Prince Rupert by Lely, a Lady Savile by Romney, and portraits of "The Trimmer," of Prior's "Sacharissa," and a host of Saviles, Lumleys, and their various connections. Rufford is full of beautiful furniture and fine tapestries, and one of the Savile ladies in the eighteenth century must have plied her embroidery needle with amazing diligence and skill, for the state rooms are full of her handiwork.

The dark Stuart chapel, with its large, roomy gallery used as the family pew, is of special interest, for it was there, one autumn day in 1574, that Charles Stuart, Earl of Lenox, and brother of Darnley, married Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury. The only child of that marriage was the ill-fated Lady Arabella Stuart. The story of this match, contrived by a pair of intriguing and scheming mothers, may be briefly told. The old Countess of Shrewsbury had a daughter to dispose of, and thanks to her own numerous marriages, she had the wherewithal to dower her children handsomely. So she aspired to a royal connection, and hearing that the Countess of Lenox and her eligible son were returning to Scotland from London, she travelled to Huntingdon to intercept them and invited them to break their journey at Rufford, which she assured them was not much out of the direct route. Her persuasion prevailed. The whole party returned to Rufford, where the Countess of Lenox, "being sickly," rested for five days and kept her chamber. But while the mother rested, the son amused himself. He became violently enamoured of his hostess' young daughter, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth, who had evidently been well schooled by her mother, returned his love. So before the five days were over, there was a wedding in Rufford Chapel, the fond parents protesting that they really had not the heart to keep two such loving turtledoves asunder. As the Earl of Shrewsbury wrote to the Earl of Leicester, "they hath so tied themselves upon their own liking as cannot part. My wife hath sent him to my lady and the young man is so far in love that

belike he is sick without her." For once, the course of true love ran very smooth. Shrewsbury added that he was very thankful to get his daughter safely married, for there were few noblemen's sons in England that his wife had not prayed him to deal with at one time or another. "And now," he concluded, "this comes unlooked for, without thanks to me."

But when Shrewsbury had to explain matters to Queen Elizabeth he wrote in a very different strain. He knew, none better, that the Queen would be furious, for the young Earl of Lenox, through his mother, was grandson of Queen Margaret of Scotland, elder sister of Henry VIII., by her second husband, Douglas Earl of Angus. The Earl, therefore, stood very close to a throne which was sadly lacking in princes and princesses of the blood, and in fact he was the next heir after Mary Queen of Scots and her son James. The Earl, therefore, wrote to the Queen as follows:—

"I must confess to your Majesty as true it is that it was dealt in suddenly and without my knowledge. But as I dare undertake and insure to your Majesty for my wife, she finding her daughter disappointed of young Barté, where she hoped, and that other young gentleman was inclined to love with a few days' acquaintance, did her best to further her daughter to this match, without having therein any other intent or respect than with reverent duty towards your Majesty."

But Queen Elizabeth was not easily deceived. Knowing the Countess of Shrewsbury as she did, she would well understand whose hand had plotted this mischief, but as the marriage was done and could not be undone, she had perforce to make the best of it. So when the infant Lady Arabella was born at Chatsworth in the following year, the Queen did not refuse her recognition, though she left the child to be brought up wholly under the care of the Countess of Shrewsbury, when the young mother died soon after. Nor did the rich Countess scruple to entreat the Queen for £600 a year for the education of her "dearest jewel, Arbella." Whether the grant was made does not appear, but the Countess vigorously pushed her granddaughter's interests so long as she lived.

There is a portrait of Arbella—for so her name was spelt in those days—in the long drawing-room at Rufford, a rather melancholy face of no particular beauty. She is dressed in the elaborate finery of the period. Another portrait of a little girl

in an enormous green dress, which is also reputed to be a portrait of Arabella, pleases by its quaintness and wistfulness. But if any girl had good cause to be melancholy it was she. Neither Queen Elizabeth nor James I. would allow her to live her life in peace. They would neither acknowledge her as a royal princess, nor would they let her marry whom she pleased. They settled maintenance but omitted payments. There were as many schemes for her marriage as there had been for the marriage of Elizabeth herself. She was treated as a sort of poor relation who might conceivably one day prove very troublesome, and it was feared that she might become a centre of insurrection and a rallying point for malcontents. And so, indeed, she did, for in 1603 a plot was concocted by two Catholic priests with the idea of setting the Lady Arabella on the throne. It was a stupid enterprise, which never had a chance of success, but it served as pretext for the arrest of such well-known men as Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Cobham and Lord Grey of Wilton, and the two latter after a trial at Winchester were sentenced to death and led out to execution, before the reprieve was produced. Associated with them and sharing their fate was Sir Griffin Markham, of Kirby Bellers, a connection of the Markhams of Ollerton, and it is interesting to note that when, a few years later, Lady Arabella escaped from detention at Barnet, a William Markham was the companion of her flight.

Eventually, Lady Arabella, at the age of thirty-five, made a secret marriage with Seymour, grandson of Catherine Grey, the heiress of the Suffolk family, and though James I. was by that time well established on the throne, the news threw him into a ludicrous state of panic. He not merely separated the bride and bridegroom but flung both of them into prison, and even when he let them out, he still kept them under guard. They arranged to fly the country together on board a French ship waiting in the Thames. Dressed as a boy, Lady Arabella escaped from Barnet, made her way to Blackwall, and then dropped down the river in a boat to Lee, where she safely got on board the vessel. Seymour, however, was late at the rendezvous, and owing to the delay the ship was captured in the Straits of Dover, and Arabella brought back in triumph by her captors. Her husband managed to slip over to Ostend, and there learnt that his wife had been recaptured. They never saw one another again, and the poor Lady Arabella soon after-

wards died of disappointment and a broken heart. Such were the luckless consequences of a scheming pair of mothers and five days of rapid love-making in the old hall at Rufford.

Nor did Rufford lack romance in the centuries which came after. The estate was left by the Earl of Shrewsbury to his son George, whose daughter and heiress married Sir George Savile, and thus started the long Savile connection with Rufford. They were not a Nottinghamshire family. Their principal residence was Thornhill Hall, near Pontefract, which was blown up and destroyed after a lengthy siege in 1648. The Hall had been most gallantly defended by Lady Savile, who, like the Countess of Derby and Lady Bankes, had played a heroine's part in the Civil War, and was a skilled intriguer and Royalist partisan. She was a widow, and her young son who came of age in 1654, after a long minority, lived in quiet retirement at Rufford. That was the wisest thing a Royalist could do who did not wish his estates sequestered. Nevertheless, Rufford was watched very closely by the local Parliamentarians who strongly suspected that it was being used as a meeting-place of the restless Royalist gentry. One day Colonel Hacker swooped down upon it and made a careful search which brought to light a number of pistols, but young Sir George was away from home and pistols were too common in those days to prove anything. There was a time, however, when a similar search would have produced much more damaging evidence, for a Royalist plot was afoot to make a sudden dash on York and seize it for the King. A quantity of arms were hidden under a false floor in the Abbey, and 200 horses stood ready in the stables, when Lord Coventry came down from London. But a messenger arrived with tidings that York was not ready, and so the plot came to nothing. At another time three mysterious strangers put up at the New Inn—now the Robin Hood—less than a mile from the Abbey, at the cross-roads on the way to Edwinstowe, and their importance was indicated by the fact that a supply of sack and claret was sent from the Abbey for their drinking. Rumour spoke of the strangers as being Prince Charles and the Dukes of York and Gloucester, but whether that was so or not, no one can say.

However, Sir George Savile contrived to live safely through the Protectorate and married, when quite young, the Lady Dorothy, daughter of the Earl of Sunderland and the famous

Sacharissa, whom Waller sang and Lely painted. A few years after the happy Restoration, Sir George Savile, by that time created Lord Savile, entertained the Duke of York, afterwards James II., in great style at Rufford, and married for his second wife Lady Gertrude Pierrepont, of Thoresby. There are few more remarkable men in English annals than this Lord Savile, who moved so skilfully through all the troubles of a critical period that he was raised from a Barony to a Viscounty, and finally to the Marquisate of Halifax. History knows him as "The Trimmer." The name was given as a title of opprobrium. He was adroit enough to accept it as a tribute to his fine sense of balance and moderation. There is a very witty passage in one of his writings in which he justifies his "trimming" thus:—

"Our climate is a Trimmer between that part of the world where men are roasted and the other where they are frozen; our church is a Trimmer between the frenzy of fanatic visions and the lethargic ignorance of Popish dreams; our laws are Trimmers between the excesses of unbounded power and the extravagance of liberty not enough restrained; even God Almighty Himself is divided between His two great attributes, His mercy and His justice. In such company our Trimmer is not ashamed of his name and willingly leaveth to the bold champions of either extreme the honour of contending with no less adversaries than Nature, religion, liberty, prudence, humanity, and common sense."

That is more clever than convincing. The Trimmer was one of those men who are of no permanent use to any political party, though first one and then the other temporarily flatters itself that it has succeeded in effecting their capture. They seem born to exasperate and to mystify. They are like those rogues of horses which will shy or run straight according to their fancy. Halifax was one of the ablest—from the intellectual point of view—statesmen of his day. He was the most eloquent speaker in the House of Lords, but his turnings and twistings were amazing. For example, he voted against the Whigs for Stafford's acquittal; he tried to save Russell and Sidney from the Tories; and he led the cheering at the acquittal of the Seven Bishops. His patriotism, however, no one could question. "I would rather die," he once finely wrote, "than see a spire of English grass trampled down by a foreign trespasser"; and in these days

especially it is worth recalling that Halifax more than any man of his generation understood the overwhelming importance of sea-power to England. "Look to your moat," was his vivid message to his countrymen, repeated again and again. The Trimmer died in 1695. A fine portrait of him hangs in the dining-room and near by is a glorious Van Dyck of the great Lord Strafford, who had visited Rufford when the Trimmer was a child, and who wrote the boy sage letters of warning as to the follies, and extravagances, and dissipations of Courts. Who better fitted than Strafford to preach on such a text, and where could he have found an apter pupil than his boyish correspondent? It was the Trimmer who built on to Rufford the Stuart wing, which includes the Long Gallery or Drawing Room, and he loved the place well, though in his later years he was a rare visitant. In 1690, five years before his death, his son, Lord Eland, reported to his father that the lodge was in ruins, the great gates dilapidated, and the garden neglected, adding, "The chief blame is to be laid at your Lordship's door for not visiting 'em oftener." In reply, Lord Halifax gave his son detailed instructions as to what he wished done in the gardens :—

"That which is to be done in the Wilderness for its further improvement is to strip the hedges and replant in places that fail. Thin those parts that grow too thick, and cut off the lower branches of the more prosperous trees. You are to tell me your opinion what you would have done in everything about the house and park, since you are likely to be more concerned in it than I am for the remainder of my life." The Wilderness is still the chief attraction of the gardens at Rufford, and this passage shows the interest which the most famous of the Saviles took in it more than two centuries ago.

Rufford had a very extraordinary visitor in the summer of 1687, when it was lent by Lord Halifax to the Marquis of Winchester (afterwards Duke of Bolton) as a resting place on his way to London from the North. The Marquis stayed at Rufford for ten days, and as he travelled with four coaches and a hundred horses in his retinue, the resources of the place were rather severely taxed. Sir John Reresby, who happened to call a day or two after the Marquis had left, wrote to his friend, Lord Halifax, to say that the Marquis had "dirtied the house more in that short time than your lordship's family would do in a

year". And the account he gives of the Marquis' eccentric behaviour makes the statement the more easily credible.

"His custom was to dine at six or seven at night, and his meal lasted till seven or eight in the morning. Sometimes he drank; sometimes he heard his music; sometimes discoursed; sometimes took tobacco and sometimes ate; whilst the company did what they pleased. They might do the same, or rise, go or come, sit down or sleep. The meat and bottles continued all the night before them. In the morning he would hunt or hawk, if the weather were favourable; if not, he would dance, go to bed about eleven, and sleep till the evening."

Bishop Burnet, who called the Marquis "the riddle of his age," said that for many weeks together he would not open his mouth till such an hour of the day as he thought the air was pure, and that he often hunted by torchlight in his passion for turning the night into day. His contemporaries were puzzled to determine whether he was mad or not, for with the utmost profusion he combined the most ravenous avarice, and Reresby adds that he "studied and managed his estate exactly in all this seeming disorder." So if the Marquis was mad there was, at least, some method in his madness, and he was schemer enough, despite his eccentricity, to get his political fidelity rewarded with a Dukedom.

The Trimmer's son succeeded to Rufford in due course, but as he left no son the Marquessate became extinct, and only the Baronetcy passed to the cousin, who inherited the estates. Of the Baronets who followed the most distinguished was the eighth—the well-known Sir George Savile, who sat in the House of Commons as M.P. for York during five successive Parliaments. He was a Whig, a strong advocate of Parliamentary reform, a friend of Burke, and thrice fortunate in having his eulogy pronounced by that great orator. "The two things," said Burke in a speech at Bristol, "which will carry him to posterity, are his two Bills. I mean that for a limitation of the claims of the Crown upon landed estates and that for the relief of the Roman Catholics. By the former he has emancipated property; by the latter he has quieted conscience, and by both he has taught that grand lesson to government and subject—no longer to regard each other as adverse parties!" Another fine tribute to Sir George Savile may be quoted from Wraxall:—"His known integrity and disinterestedness, joined to his ex-

tensive landed property, elevated him more than any endowments of intellect or parliamentary ability. He possessed, nevertheless, plain manly sense, and a facility of utterance which, even independent of his high character and ample future, always secured him attention." Charles Fox, indeed, said of him that he was the best speaker who had never held office. But the finest testimony to the position he held among the men of his day was the fact that he was chosen in 1780 to present the Petition of the County Associations against the growing encroachments of Personal Government upon the constitutional liberties of the people.

Sir George Savile took full advantage of the Enclosure Acts and planted more than a thousand acres in oak and ash. He never married and at his death, in 1784, Rufford passed to his nephew, the younger son of his sister Barbara, Countess of Scarbrough, whose portrait by Reynolds hangs in the dining room. The Hon. John Lumley, the lucky inheritor, took the name of his benefactor, and himself, on the death of his brother, succeeded to the Earldom of Scarbrough. That accounts for the frequency with which the Scarbrough motto is met with at Rufford. For a time Rufford seems to have been dismantled of most of its trappings. The antiquary Throsby, who visited it about 1795, refers to it in a curiously slighting way, for he says that "as a dwelling, it has neither enough of religious antiquity remaining to attract or splendour as a seat to arrest the stranger's travel," though he goes on to say that "it is seated pleasantly and is of sufficient magnitude for the residence of family and fortune." Nevertheless, when George IV. was Prince of Wales he was entertained with befitting splendour at Rufford—the elder Dibdin was Master of the Ceremonies for the occasion—which remained a seat of the Earls of Scarbrough down to the middle of the nineteenth century. Then, in 1856, the property passed to Mr. Henry Savile, who was for some time British Ambassador at Rome. He was one of three brothers, well known in the society of their day as men of great artistic taste and high accomplishments. He died s.p. in 1881, and was succeeded in the estates by his brother the Rev. Augustus Lumley-Savile, who for many years had been Rector of Bilsthorpe. It is the latter's son who is the present Lord Savile, the old Barony being revived in his favour by King Edward VII. Lord Savile was honoured by the intimate friendship of King

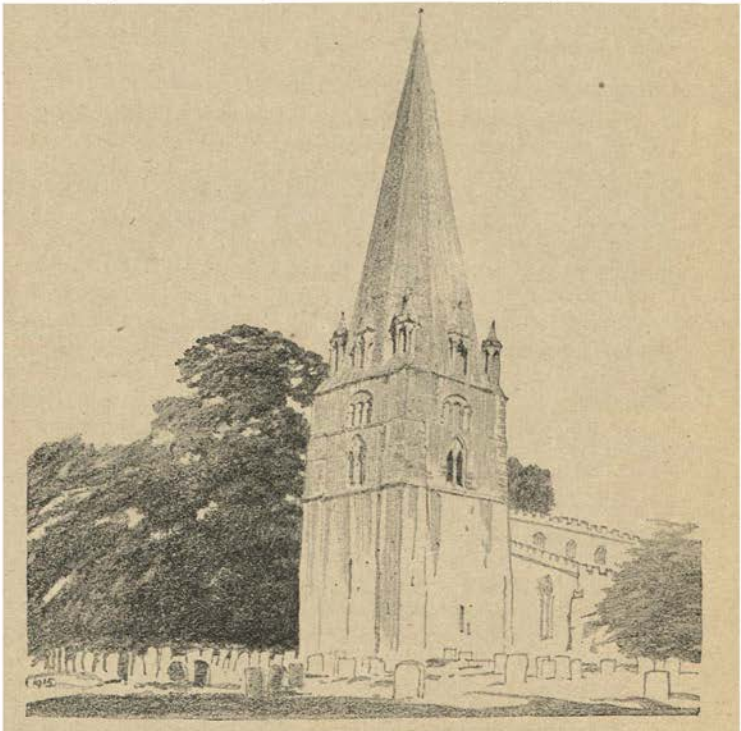
Edward, who came to Rufford seven years in succession during Doncaster Week, and the suite of rooms which he occupied, looking out on to the Wilderness at the side of the house, now bears his name. Those were probably the gayest weeks that Rufford Abbey has ever witnessed in its long history, and may well have provided material for some sparkling pages in private diaries which at some future date, perhaps, will see the light. But royal visitor and gracious hostess have alike passed away. Lady Savile, to the general regret of the district, died in 1912, and was buried at her express desire in the Wilderness which she had tended and loved.

A long two miles to the south east of Rufford, and best approached by a charming footpath through the Park and fields, is the picturesque village of Eakring, the most interesting association of which is with the Rev. William Mompesson, who was rector from 1670 to his death, in 1708. A small brass to his memory may be seen in the chancel of the church and a window of no particular merit. Mompesson was the gallant and devoted clergyman, whose fame is for ever associated with the village of Eyam, in Derbyshire, when the Great Plague raged there mercilessly for a whole year, from September, 1665, to October, 1666. He nobly persuaded his flock that it was their duty to remain in their homes and isolate themselves from the neighbouring villages so that the dreadful infection might not spread. Thus for a whole twelvemonth Eyam was cut off from the world, and Mompesson lost his devoted wife, and believed that he himself was a dying man. But he survived, and his patron, Sir George Savile, appointed him in 1670 to the rectory at Eakring. Though nearly four years had passed between the staying of the plague at distant Eyam and Mompesson's coming to Eakring, the inhabitants of his new parish were so terrified that they would not let him enter the village or hold service in the church. He was compelled to live in a rude shelter in Rufford Park, and he held service under an ash tree in a large field in the parish. This ash tree obtained the name of Pulpit Ash. When Lord Savile's father succeeded to the Rufford estate he was much interested in the story, and at the suggestion of Canon Cator, the rector of Eakring, put up a stone memorial cross on the traditional site. This is just outside the village on rising ground in the direction of Bilsthorpe, and a fine ash tree now waves above the simple monument.

The story of Mompesson's heroism has often been told, and his heroism has won unstinted admiration. All the greater, therefore, is the surprise to find that such letters of his as have survived are written in a most stilted and affected style. But then they were addressed to his patron, and letters to patrons in the eighteenth century were usually fulsome to the point of nausea. To his credit, Sir George Savile loathed this style of address, and once when Mompesson, in company, called down the special blessings of Heaven upon his dear lord and patron, Sir George bluntly told him that even if he could not help being a fool, there was no need to inform the Almighty whose fool he was. That must effectually have spoilt the parson's appetite for the rest of the day. Mompesson became a Prebendary of Southwell and was content with that preferment. When he was offered the Deanery of Lincoln he refused it.

Edwinstowe, a short two miles to the west of Ollerton, on the River Maun, is a pretty and picturesque village on the edge of the Forest. It consists of a long main street, a fine old church, with a spire which forms the most familiar landmark of the district, and an attractive Hall just beyond. It is best known now as a starting-point for the drive through the Dukeries, but the little town has an interesting history as possessing the mother church of the neighbourhood. It was, therefore, the centre of the social life of the Forest villages roundabout. Tradition says that Edwinstowe derives its name from the fact that King Edwin's body was brought there for temporary burial after the battle of Heathfield or Hatfield, where he was defeated and slain by Penda, King of Mercia, in 633, and the ancient church is also said to have witnessed the marriage of Robin Hood and Maid Marian. But that is as may be. In 1672 the spire was destroyed by lightning and the people petitioned the Crown for £200 worth of forest trees for the repair of the main fabric, which was described as being "extremely shaken and in a very ruinous condition." The whole building has been again repaired and restored within recent years. Inside the church, on the wall near the Rigley memorial is a projecting stone, eighteen inches long, which is known as the Forest Foot. Its old position was above the south chancel door, but it was removed inside when it began to show signs of becoming weather worn. It was used, according to the register of Newstead Abbey, "for renting the wastes of the Forest," and similar

stone measures were kept at Newstead and at St. Mary's, Nottingham. Three barleycorns in this measure made one inch, eighteen inches one foot, and thirty feet one perch. Whether this is the original stone or not is uncertain. It is clearly part of a string course, but this may very well have been



Edwinstowe Church.

diverted to the purpose of serving as a measure. The dwarf pillar piscina, in the south-east corner of the chancel, is a great rarity, and under the piscina in the south aisle is now fixed the stone altar, which the present vicar recovered from the floor of the belfry. When Queen Elizabeth ordered the destruction of all stone altars in the parish churches, her command was

evidently evaded at Edwinstowe, and the plausible suggestion has been made by the present vicar, in his pamphlet on the Church, that the request of the Rev. Henry Tinkar, vicar of Edwinstowe, who died in 1583, to be " buried under the great stone that lieth near the choir door in Edwinstowe churchyard " may probably be explained by the fact that this stone was the altar slab of the great altar which he himself had removed to that position. The royal command could not be ignored altogether, but many a vicar no doubt hoped that still another change of religious policy at headquarters would bring back the old religion in whole or in part. It may be noted that the spire of Edwinstowe church is an irregular polygon. This irregularity is due to the fact that it was set on an older tower which was not four-square and, therefore, not designed for a polygon spire.

Clipstone, two miles to the south-west of Edwinstowe, contains the fragmentary remains of a royal hunting lodge, which bears the name of King John's Palace. The ruins consist of the rubble shell of an outer wall, pierced by windows from which all the worked stones have been removed. There is, therefore, nothing romantic about the ruin, which is gaunt, ugly and bare. John is known to have visited Clipstone on four separate occasions, but he was not its builder. It was Henry II. who improved the fabric and enclosed it within a park. Richard I. met King William of Scotland here on his return from the East, in 1194; Edward I. held a Parliament here in 1290, and Edward II. was a frequent visitor. Then Henry IV. made over the place to the Earl of March, and it was allowed to fall into decay. Those who visit Clipstone can hardly fail to observe the remarkable irrigation canal, known as the Duke's Flood Dike, which was made by the Fourth Duke of Portland at a cost of £80,000, and converted a barren valley into a fine stretch of pasture. It extends to near Ollerton. During the Great War, also, one of the largest military camps in the Midlands has been situated near Clipstone on a stretch of land provided by the Duke of Portland.

CHAPTER XX

BLYTH; STYRRUP; BARNBY MOOR

BLYTH is our next destination, and from Ollerton the road runs due north, skirting the edge of Thoresby Park, past Perlethorpe, and then two miles forward to the Normanton Inn. The road soon crosses the Poulter, reaches Apley Head Wood and the entrance to the famous Duke's Drive, and then, in another mile, crosses the line of the Great Central Railway, and strikes the Worksop and Retford road at Ranby. This makes a long stretch of about eight miles from Ollerton, but the road is of considerable beauty, and also of antiquarian interest, because this was the old highway from Nottingham to the North, along the eastern edge of the Forest. Yet much even of this is relatively modern, for the original track passed to the east both of Rufford and Ollerton, which were both within the Forest, and picturesque Wellow was then the principal village on this side of Sherwood. In the old perambulations there is rarely any mention of Ollerton; the reference is usually to "the road which runs from Wellow to Nottingham." We saw a part of this track at Conjure Alders and the King's Ford; it is still traceable—either as footpath, green-lane, parish boundary, or metalled road—all the way from near Perlethorpe through Wellow and North Laiths, and out into the main road again at the Red Bridge, to the west of Bilsthorpe, where the road crosses the Rainworth Water. Bilsthorpe, Eakring, and Wellow were the important villages on this edge of the Forest.

Ranby possesses nothing of note save its obviously Danish name. Raven-by, or the town of Odin's bird, the raven, points to a Danish settlement, like Ranskill (Raven-skill), a few miles to the north-east. It is described in "Magna Britannia" as "an old decayed town," though it is difficult to believe that it

was ever more than a hamlet, and the same writer refers to "certain oaks called the Ranby Oaks noted for their tallness and bigness," in terms which show that they had lately succumbed to age and weather. We leave the Worksop and Retford high road by the pillared inn, and crossing the Chesterfield Canal reach the Chequer House, which gives its name to inn and station. A big ivy-clad farm-house, with generous barns, it stands at the junction of the high road with Thievesdale Lane, which also tells its own story and confesses its once evil repute.

This Thievesdale Lane is worth a leisurely exploration, for as soon as it crosses the Ryton, close by the Chequer House, it becomes a green unmetalled track which runs across country for three miles to the Blyth and Worksop road, and then for another mile to the Worksop and Doncaster highway. The odds are that you will not meet a soul on this pleasant track, twenty yards wide in places, with gorse bushes aflame between the numerous ruts, and fine woods and coverts and a few rare patches of uncultivated land on either side to show what manner of rough country it was in the old days. Halfway you pass a lodge whence a good road leads down to Scofton and Osberton Hall, the seat of the Foljambes, owners of a considerable tract between here and Blyth. For a century the Osberton estate was associated with a branch of the Thornhaughs, an old Nottinghamshire family which sprang from near Sturton-le-Steeple, and it was an owner of Osberton, John Thornhaugh, M.P., who was president of the Nottinghamshire meeting at the fatal dinner at the Star and Garter, in Pall Mall, when Mr. Chaworth was killed by Lord Byron, in 1765. His daughter and heiress married a Foljambe, and Osberton has remained in Foljambe hands ever since. Moreover, a steady process of consolidation has gone on, for the neighbouring estates of Scofton and Bilby were purchased and their halls demolished. Scofton Church stands on the site of Scofton Hall, which belonged for a time to the Suttons, and when Bilby Hall was dismantled part of it was converted into kennels. The reigning Foljambe in the mid-Victorian era was for forty years a famous owner of fox-hounds, and one of his sons, who lived at Cockglode, near Ollerton, was raised to the peerage with the title of Lord Hawkesbury.

Past the Chequer House the road gradually mounts to a spacious elevated plateau, commanding extensive views, and,

in a mile and a half, reaches a corner whence a lane goes off on the left to the old Foljambe kennels at Bilby, across the Ryton—only a few beagles are kept there now—and another strikes off to the right with uncompromising straightness. That is the way of the main current of traffic, but we keep straight on the grass-grown ancient road, which is soon to be converted, it is said, by the Road Board into a modern highway. Doubtless, that will be much to the advantage of the district, but it will rob the road of its charm for the pedestrian and of its seclusion for the gipsies and van-dwellers, who have haunted it for generations.

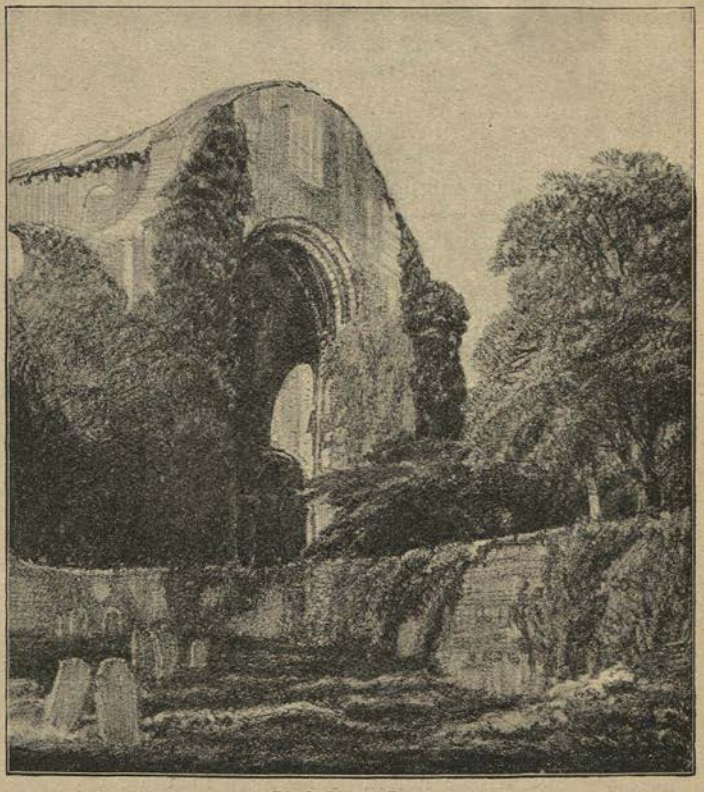
This old road to Blyth is perfectly delightful for the next mile. Then, opposite a by-road on the right, a cottage is reached with a curious mound, obviously artificial, at its side. This bears the ominous name of Blyth Law Hill, and tradition points to it as the site of the gibbet, on which malefactors were hanged by the Prior of Blyth. That he had the power of hanging is clear from the terms of the deed whereby the owners of Tickhill made over to the Priory, which they founded, all rights in the honour of Blyth. The hill is about the highest point of the plateau we are crossing, and the gallows-tree would be visible for many a long mile. But against this picturesque tradition is the prosaic fact that the word "law" is only another form of "hlaw," which means a hill, so that Blyth Law merely means Blyth Hill. Soon a road joins us on the left hand, and a little way on we pass a good house on the same side, bearing the name of the Spital Farm. Here, in the old days, was the Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, built and endowed by William Cressy, of Hodsock, and designed for a warden, rector, and three chaplains, whose duty it was to look after the lepers of the district. Time passed; leprosy vanished out of the land; and in the middle of the fifteenth century the Archbishop of York was offering indulgences of a hundred days to all who would contribute towards its re-establishment as a hospital for poor strangers and pregnant women. This hospital survived the Reformation, but its subsequent history is exceedingly obscure. Its fate, however, was that of many other similar institutions. The lands became alienated; the original purpose of the trust was neglected; and at the end of the eighteenth century there had arisen on the site a large house, called Blyth Spital, occupied by people fairly well to do, while the "poor

strangers" were accommodated in a mean dwelling close by. The next move was to pull down the Spital, and build the present private house, while six brick almshouses were erected a little further down the road, to each inmate of which the owner of the Spital pays 6*s.* 8*d.* a year. To such a mean ending has a once substantial charity dwindled! The six almshouses are plain one-storeyed tenements, about as unattractive and cheerless as well could be. The beginning of the nineteenth century was not a favourable time for the poor, when ancient trusts were being revised and brought up to date.

Blyth is now in sight, and though this is not the most picturesque approach to the little town, its charm is undeniable, for everywhere there are noble trees, and the red tiles gleam a friendly welcome. The river Ryton here describes one of its largest bends, forming three sides of a quadrilateral, and within this, on a slight eminence, stands the village, the name of which gave Fuller an easy opening for airing his placid philosophy. Quoting Norden's derivation of the name as signifying *a jucunditate,* Fuller goes on to say: "From the mirth and good fellowship of the inhabitants therein. If so, I desire that both the name and the thing may be extended all over the shire, as being confident that an ounce of mirth with the same degree of grace will serve God more and more acceptably than a pound of sorrow." We enter at once the main street of Blyth and find it surprisingly broad, with a long, diamond-shaped strip of grass running down the centre, and a mound whereon the school is built—a school which has an ancient doorway dating back to the twelfth century, an evident relic of the old Hospital of St. John. The width of the street is explained by the fact that other rows of houses which stood in the middle fell into decay and were pulled down, as the town lost its old importance. The result is extraordinarily happy from the picturesque point of view. At the further end the street receives the main road from Barnby Moor and then forks, one road branching off to the left to Maltby, and the other—the ancient highway—continuing to run due north. And there in the fork, on a pleasant elevation, stand the old Priory Church and the Hall, side by side and so closely connected that the whole north side and east end of the church are actually located in the Hall garden and are, therefore, unapproachable by the public.

Blyth Priory was founded in 1088 by Roger de Busli, one of

the favourites of William the Conqueror, who scattered manors with generous hands among his faithful friends. It was a small Priory of Benedictines, subordinate to the Prior of St. Katherine of Rouen, who had the appointment in his gift and received



Blyth Priory Ruins.

the revenues, which were never very large. Those who built the ancient conventual church built it well. The eastern part has all gone; only the great arch is visible from the churchyard looking down upon the private garden of the Hall. The north

aisle and nave remain almost as they left the builder's hands; the south aisle, enlarged to its present size in 1290 in order to serve as the parish church, was doubtless the means of saving the whole from destruction at the Reformation. The tower, which serves as landmark for miles around, dates from about 1400. The north aisle and nave are pure and early Norman, massive, rough, impressive, bare and cold to the eye but majestic and enduring. It has been suggested that the architect borrowed his plans from the Abbey of Jumièges in Normandy. Portions of the old painted screens remain in the nave and south aisle, the lower panels filled with saints, some of whom are still recognisable. At the east end of the north aisle is an ugly plain wall, once covered with a fresco, of which a few traces may be seen. The big Mellish monument originally stood at this east end, but was moved fifty years ago to its present position.

No trace is left of the domestic buildings of the Priory which Roger de Busli founded, but their site is occupied by Blyth Hall, a worthy neighbour of the grand old church. A pleasanter situation could not be conceived. Church and Hall stand on rising ground, round which flows the winding Ryton, whose stream has been broadened out into a good sheet of water. This is spanned by a graceful stone bridge which crosses the main road to Maltby. The slopes of the little hill are rich and green, and beyond the lake are flat water meadows, so that the views from the windows of the Hall and its broad terraces are as pleasant and pastoral as could be desired. The house itself, best seen from the highway near the bridge, with the tower of the church showing above the trees, is of no architectural distinction, but some interesting memories attach to it.

A good early description is to be found in Celia Fiennes' diary of her ride through England on a side-saddle in the reign of William and Mary. She says :—

"At Blith was a very sweet house and garden and grounds, it was of brick work coyned with stones and the windows with stone, all sashes: the building was so neat and exact, it was square with four juttings out at each corner: it stands high and commands the sight of the country about. The fine river by it with fish ponds and meadows and fine woods beyond makes it look very pleasant. The gardens are very neat and after the London mode of gravel and grass walks and mount, and the squaires with dwarfes and cyprus, ffirre and all sorts of greens

and fruit trees; it's very ffruitefull—I eate good fruit there. Its just by the church so that a large arch which did belong to the church is now made a shady seate to the garden with greens over it, under which is a sepulchre for the family. It belongs to one Mr. Mellish, a merchant in London; its in all parts a most compleat thing, and its scituation most pleasant."

This Mr. Mellish, who rebuilt Blyth Hall and founded the fortunes of a family still highly honoured in the county for

Ruins of Blyth Priory Church.

devoted public service, may be seen in effigy in the church. There he lies, as in life, a short man and a stout, wearing the full wig of the days of Queen Anne. He reclines stiffly on his side, propped on his right elbow, his legs crossed, maintaining a dignified yet highly uncomfortable poise *in saecula saeculorum*. Such was Mr. Edward Mellish, son of John Mellish of Blyth parish, who after twenty years trade in Portugal, "returned with a plentiful estate and built a mansion house on the site of his father's house." His epitaph tells us that he "lived a sober

and religious life, generous to his friends, kind to his neighbours, hospitable to strangers, and charitable to the poor"—a list of virtues well within the compass of the rich merchant-prince who settled down to pass his latter days in the country, as so many of his time did, and become the ancestor of a race of squires. He died in 1703, and for a century the fortunes of the family remained unimpaired, and, indeed, were improved by advantageous marriages. A curious story is told of William Mellish, who, in 1741, was elected M.P. for East Retford. He was betrothed to "a Jewess of great property," but by her father's will she could not inherit until her husband was elected a Member of Parliament. So Mellish stood for East Retford, and arranged with his wife that if he were elected he would send a messenger with a grey horse to bear the tidings, while if he lost he would mount him on a bay. The rival candidate failed to appear at the last moment, and so the grey was despatched. But when the lady caught sight of it, she was so overcome with joy that she fell into hysterics and died. It was this same William Mellish who was praised by Arthur Young for having made ten miles of public road at his own expense, and for having dug the big drains which drained the Whitewater marsh. He built the new bridge over the Ryton with stone quarried from Roche Abbey, planted 200 acres of plantations, put up several farm houses and 30 cottages of brick and tile, and also the very handsome pile of stabling which forms such a conspicuous feature of the village. Moreover, he added considerably to the Hall and built the big drawing-room with the huge bow-window, which in later days was radiant with a crimson velvet carpet and yellow silk embroidery.

His son, Charles Mellish, was a squire with the simple quiet tastes of an eager antiquary, but to him an heir was born, destined quickly to dissipate the substantial fortunes which others had raised. This was Henry, better known as Colonel Mellish, whose name was once on the lips of every sportsman. A friend of the Regent, he was a notable gambler in an age of great gamblers, and he was a lavish patron of the turf. Little wonder that long before he died, in 1817, at the age of thirty-seven, the Blyth Hall estate had to be sold, and he had lost his patrimony.

Mellish, however, was a man of very different calibre from the ordinary young spendthrift who ruined himself on the turf. He was, indeed, a man of first rate ability, an excellent scholar

—there is a story told of his correcting two Oxford Dons at a dinner table on a passage in Livy—a good musician, an excellent artist, and a first-rate soldier. But he was also a born gambler, and hence the swiftness of his downfall. His father died while he was still a minor, and at seventeen he joined the 18th Light Dragoons, but soon transferred into the 10th Hussars, of which the Regent was Colonel. That was the crack cavalry regiment of the day, and Mellish flung himself so whole-heartedly into extravagance and folly that he is said to have been given permanent leave of absence, lest his example should ruin his brother officers. After winning his first race at Durham, he took to the turf so joyously that when his racing career came to an end in 1807, he had 38 racers in training, 17 carriage horses, 12 hunters in Leicestershire, 4 chargers at Brighton, and hacks past all counting. Mellish cut a splendid figure, for he was a singularly handsome man, and he dressed for the races in summer in white hat, white trousers, and white silk stockings, which showed off by contrast his black curly hair and long drooping cavalry moustaches. He used to drive on to the course in a coach and four, and a story is told of his pulling up his team in front of the Regent's box at Brighton, and asking whether any of his friends would give him a job as coachman if his horse were beat. He had matched for that occasion Sancho—winner of the St. Leger in 1804—against the Duke of Cleveland's Pavilion, and, of course, had backed him heavily. "The Druid" thus described the scene:—

"Brighton and all its Steyne joys were made still more delightful on that July afternoon when Mellish appealed for the second time against the result of the New Claret Stakes, in the 3,000 guinea a side match over Lewes. Sir John Lade, whose cookbride had once challenged a fair rival to drive four horses eight miles at Newmarket for 500 p.p. sat behind six greys in the royal barouche, and the Colonel followed with his four to match, in charge of the Countess of Barrymore, who might or might not have been cognisant of the fact that her whip was to act as second to her husband at daybreak. Pavilion, with Sam Chifney up, was the first to canter and then Buckle, in his white and crimson sleeves, on the lengthy yellow-boy, Sancho; but even the knowledge that his owner who led him down the course, had backed him to win £20,000 did not dispirit the layers of 6 to 4 on his old Raby conqueror. The result of the first match over Lewes had made them equally wild to back Sancho, but he had

hit his leg at exercise a few days before, and this was their only chance of saving their money. The odds, however, quickly fell to 5 to 1 as Sancho went up to his opponent's quarters in the last mile and commanded him from that point till his leg gave way within the distance. Such trifles did not weigh long upon a philosophic mind like the Colonel's. He lunched at the Star with the royal party as calmly as if he had been losing mere three-penny points at whist, and at daybreak was seen entreating Mr. Howarth (Lord Barrymore's opponent in the duel) who had stripped to the buff to prevent his clothes getting into the wound, to shake hands after one shot and dress himself once more."

The duel between Lord Barrymore and Mr. Howarth—which arose over a quarrel at cards, in which the noble lord called his opponent a liar, and immediately received a blow in the eye—took place at Block Bottom, between Rottingdean and Brighton. Each fired a single shot without effect, and then Mellish intervened and induced the combatants to shake hands.

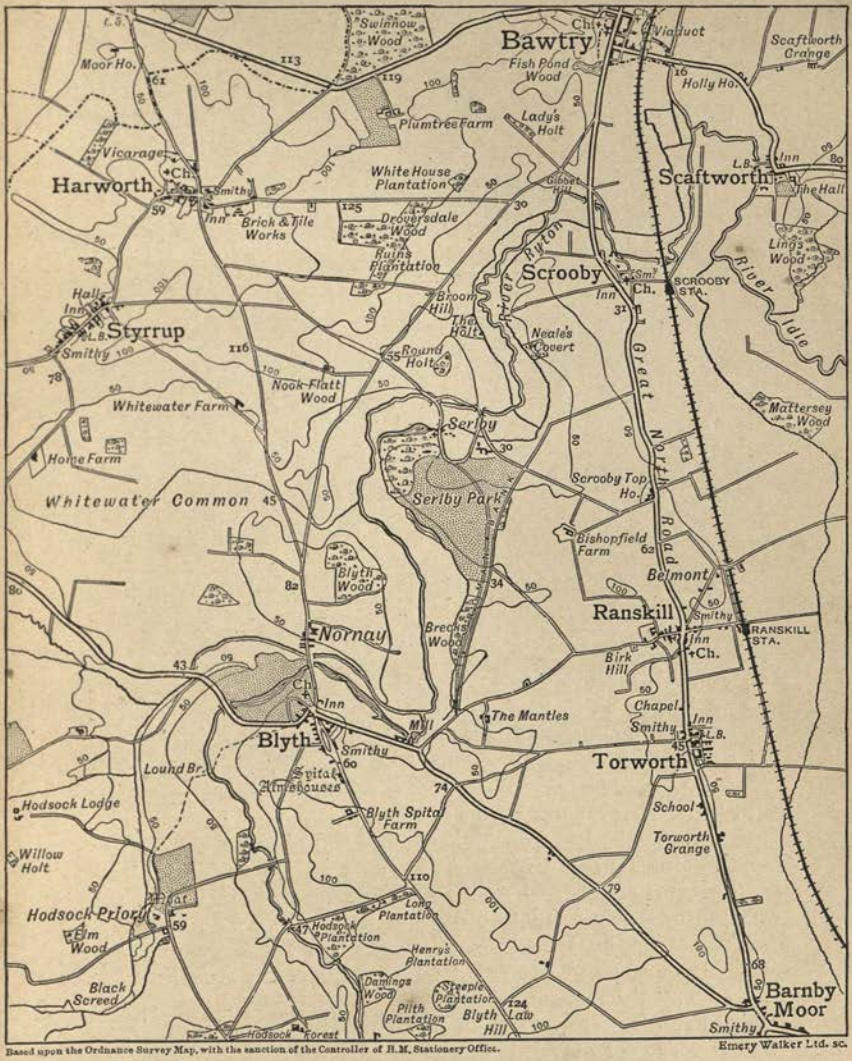
Mellish's chief racing triumphs were won at Doncaster within a few miles of his home at Blyth. He carried off the St. Leger in successive years, 1804 and 1805, with Sancho and Staveley, and hoped to repeat the victory in 1806. But the race that year went to Fyldener, after some of the most terrific betting on record, for it was reported in the *Sporting Magazine* that a million guineas had been laid two months before the race was run. Mellish had the reputation of never opening his mouth in the ring for less than 500 guineas, and wherever he was he set the pace. Fyldener broke him, though the real cause of his ruin lay not so much on the turf as on the gaming table. He is credited with having lost £40,000 on a single throw of the dice, and £97,000 at a single sitting at Brooks'. On the latter occasion, he met the Duke of Sussex just as he was leaving the club, and the Duke persuaded him to turn back and try his luck once more. He did so, with the result that he won £100,000 from the Duke himself. But whereas Mellish always paid his losses, the Duke could not pay his, and offered, so it was said, an annuity of £4,000 a year. The single throw for £40,000 is said to have occurred at Blyth Hall, when the Regent and the Duke of Clarence honoured the Colonel with their company on their return from the very St. Leger on which Mellish had hoped to retrieve his broken fortunes.

That was one version of the story. Another, which appeared in a recently published volume, "The Letters of Harriet, Countess Granville," put the scene at Carlton House, and is specially curious because it represents the Prince Regent—of all men—in a state of virtuous indignation. The extract is as follows :—

"There has been some terrible play at the P. of Wales's. He never allows of it, but after he went to bed Prince Adolphus, Cte. Beaujolais, Mr. Mellish, and Mr. B. Craven sat up till Prince Adolphus had won 80,000! of Mr. Mellish at rouge et noir. There was then some pause and conversation, Mr. M. saying he was completely ruined; and they sat down again, when Prince A. lost it all back and 12,000 more to it. Beaujolais won 3,000, and 900 of Mr. Mellish, which was immediately paid. Prince A. declared his inability to pay. In the morning the P. of Wales was very angry when he heard of it, and said that had it ended with his brother's winning he should have insisted on his not receiving it, as he allowed no play in his house, and for the future anything won or lost there should go for nothing; but that he could not suffer Prince Adolphus to owe to Mr. M. and Cte. B., therefore he would endeavour to get the money, hoping the great inconvenience it put him to was the best lesson his brother could receive."

Gambling on that scale meant sure ruin, and when the crash came Blyth Hall was sold to a wealthy iron-founder of Sheffield, named Walker, while Mellish himself went off on active service in the Peninsula. He served three campaigns with Sir Rowland Ferguson and the Duke of Wellington, and though the latter said that he never had a better officer than Mellish on his staff, he sent him home, because of his demoralising influence on his associates. One of the best stories about him describes how he turned up one morning in camp riding a wretched screw, for which his friends said no one would give a five pound note. Mellish promptly laid odds that he would get more than forty pounds for him. When these had been freely taken, Mellish turned his horse's head towards the French lines and rode forward in a leisurely way till he was greeted with a volley. His horse was killed under him, and he then coolly walked back and claimed to have won the bets, because the Government paid £45 for every officer's horse shot in action.

On his return he settled down at Hodsock Priory, the solitary



Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

Scale of 1 Mile

Heights in feet thus:.....60 Contours .....200 Footpaths.....

relic of his family estates, within two miles of his old home. No longer able to afford to breed horses, he turned to greyhounds, and soon had a stud equal to the best; he bred cattle and took a prominent part at the shows; and amused himself with the arts of music, drawing and painting. Happily for him, his wife had a private fortune, which he could not touch. But alike in adversity as in the heyday of his prosperity, Colonel Mellish was "blest with temper" and took both the smiles and frowns of Fortune with equal serenity, and whatever follies he may have committed nothing mean or discreditable was ever charged against him.

There is yet another aspect of Mellish's career to which reference must be made. In his day an enthusiastic sportsman was pretty sure to be a patron of "the noble art," and so we find that a certain "little common," within a quarter of a mile of Blyth, was the scene of a great fight, which was the talk of the sporting world in 1805. This was the encounter between Jem Belcher and Pearce, the Game Chicken, mere names in these times, but the darlings of a century ago. Belcher had been champion some years before, but he had lost the sight of an eye through an accident with a tennis ball, and he had long been off the active list, when his friends backed him for 500 guineas against the younger pugilist, then just risen to the top of the profession. A ring 20 feet square had been roped out on the common, inside another square of 40 feet, and the crowd is described as being unprecedented, considering the distance from London. The Chicken's supporters wore favours of a blue silk and white spot handkerchief, while Belcher's friends sported handkerchiefs with a yellow stripe. The betting at the outset was 5 to 4 on the Chicken; at the end of the second round it was 20 to 12 on him; at the end of the eighth it was level. But Belcher was a beaten man in the twelfth round, and after the odds had risen to 10 to 1 on the Chicken in the sixteenth, Belcher had to own himself vanquished in the eighteenth. The fight had lasted thirty-five minutes, and the Chicken finished so fresh that he leaped over the rope into the ring and "threw a somerset."

The result of this fight at Blyth was to crown the Chicken with glory, not only because he had overthrown his rival, but because he had displayed a rare magnanimity when he had Belcher at his mercy. In the twelfth round, and again in the

sixteenth, he threw Belcher on the rope, where he lay helplessly trying to balance himself. The Chicken might easily have dealt him a knock-out blow which would have terminated at once the fight and his rival's life, but he forbore and walked away, amid the enthusiastic cheers of all present. That his generosity made a great impresssion upon all who witnessed it, the following account of an eye-witness will show :—

"Twelfth round :—The character of a pugilist was never seen to greater advantage than in this round—the Chicken rallied most furiously, and Belcher was losing his strength fast—they closed, and Pearce threw Jem upon the rope, and might, most undoubtedly, have put an end to the fight, had not his humanity rose superior to every other consideration. Belcher was balancing on his back and in a most pitiable and defenceless state, but the Chicken, like a man, was above taking so cruel an advantage of his friend, and putting himself in an offensive posture, to show that Belcher was in his power, he exclaimed most feelingly, 'I'll take no advantage of thee, Jem ; I'll not hit thee, no, lest I hurt thine other eye.' Such a circumstance ought never to be forgotten—the spectators felt it at the time by their universal plaudits—and it will live long in Humanity's memory."

The fight over, Belcher was driven off in a chaise to a doctor, while the Chicken, in high feather, returned to the Bell, at Barnby Moor, which had been his headquarters. "Dang it, I'm not hurt," said he; "I've only cut my crook against his teeth," and then, pulling out a blue and white handkerchief, he shouted, "Since I've won it, I'll wear it. No more Belchers now!"

Nor was Belcher the only pugilist who found in Colonel Mellish a generous patron. It was Mellish who first introduced the famous Tom Crib to the boxing world, and he who made John Gully—afterwards betting-man, owner of race-horses, county gentleman, and Member of Parliament for Pontefract—acknowledge himself beaten by the redoubtable Chicken, when he was receiving severe punishment. Gully's defeat meant to Mellish the loss of a small fortune, so heavily had he backed him, but he was always the true-hearted sportsman. He once quarrelled with his friend, Martin Hawke, and they had a duel by the roadside near York. Said Mellish, as he took his station, "Take care of yourself, Hawke, for, by God, I shall hit you." "I will, my lad," said Hawke, "and let me recom-

mend you to take care of your own canister." Mellish fired first, and missed. Hawke replied, and hit Mellish on the elbow. "Hang it!" he called out, "you've winged me, but give me your hand!" And so the quarrel was over. Foolish, no doubt, but quite irresistible! Even the sternest moralist may be gentle in his censure.

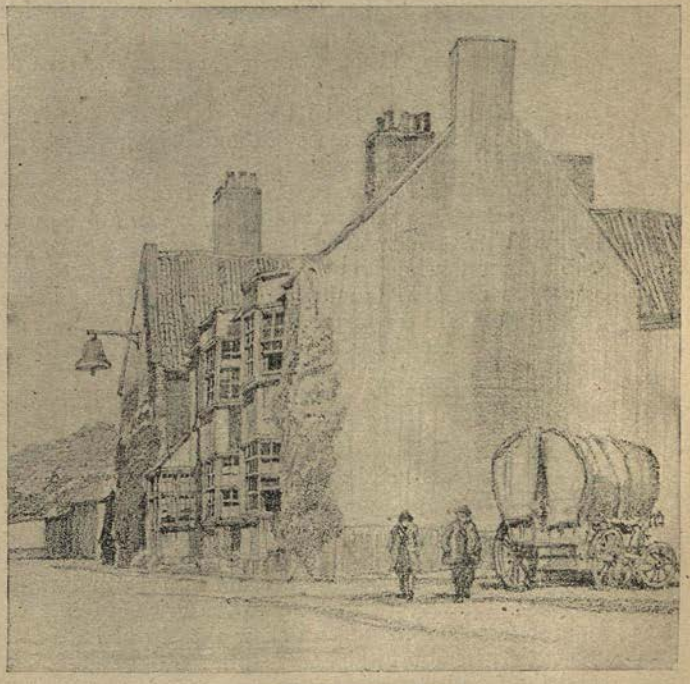
Blyth Hall has passed through many hands since the Colonel had to part with it, but Hodsock Priory is still the home of a Mellish. This, in Tudor and pre-Tudor days, was one of the great houses of the county, the home of the Cressys and later of the Cliftons. Leland mentions it, for the old antiquary came to Blyth on his wanderings and peered about for the ruins of a castle, of which he had heard some talk, but looked to little profit. The church disappointed him, for it contained "noe tombes of noble men." No doubt, Leland stayed at the Angel Inn, which even in his day had a recorded history of three centuries. It is a curious old inn near the church, with ancient underground passages which now serve as "cellars cool."

Near Blyth is the site of one of the mediæval tournament fields. It is scarcely worth the tourist's while to make a special journey to find it, for there is nothing to see, neither stone, nor inequality in the ground, and the actual field cannot be determined with absolute precision. But those who are curious in these matters will discover the approximate site easily enough if they make their way to Styrrup—the place name is suggestive of knights and their horses—and passing through the little hamlet take the road which leads to Oldcoates. It rises a little up a gentle eminence, and then falls as gently to a rectangular bend in the roadway. There is a pleasant wood on the left hand, and between the wood and the long ridge over which you have just passed is a broad level expanse. Just hereabouts is the tournament ground, one of the five which were licensed by Richard I. for the whole of England in the year 1194.

The late Rev. J. Stacye, writing on the subject of this long lost tournament ground, drew attention to the fact that in some old deeds relating to Styrrup mention is made of a common meadow called Terminings. This he boldly guessed to be a corruption of Tourneyings. The next field is still called "The Raker," sometimes written "Wreaker," and this he connected with the idea of "wreaking or avenging knights." Better still, however, is the discovery that a small enclosure close to Styrrup

bears the attractive name of "Gallant Steads," which carries its meaning on the face of it as the "steading of the knights." Anyway, whatever the exact spot, it is beyond doubt that this was the place "*inter Blie et Tickhill*," where tournaments were sometimes held, though it never was so famous a ground as either of its four companions. These were situate between Salisbury and Wilton, between Stamford and Warinford, between Warwick and Kenilworth, and between Brackley and Mixbury. It may be asked why Blyth should have been chosen. The answer undoubtedly is because of its proximity to the once important Castle of Tickhill, just across the border in Yorkshire. The Blyth ground was the northernmost of the five, and it lay near the North road in a convenient situation. But why were these five places licensed at all? The royal grant gives the following curious explanation—*Ita quod pax terrae nostrae non infringetur, nec potestas justiciaria minorabitur, nec forestis nostris dampnum inferetur.* In other words, the object was to prevent breaches of the peace, to preserve the judicial authority from being lessened, and to protect the royal forests from damage. The historian, William of Newbury, says that the knightly custom of holding tourneys was introduced into England with the object of restoring public discipline, which had fallen into disrepute. The competitors were required to pay entrance fees according to their rank—an Earl paid 20 marks, a Baron 10, a landed knight 4, and a landless knight 2—and the fees were carefully collected before the competitors were allowed to enter the lists. But it would seem that in spite of the license the Crown frequently thought it advisable to prohibit projected tournaments from taking place. So in 1255, and again in 1273 and 1314, we find the King sending instructions to the Prior of Blyth to attend the tournament ground and show the Royal letters of prohibition to the assembled knights, doubtless owing to political reasons and the fear lest feuds between the combatants might be carried to undue lengths. There is no record of any famous tournament being held at Blyth, and the memory of the old ground had long died out until it was revived of recent years. None of the early tourists refers to it. Leland passed quite close, and evidently knew nothing of its existence. Those who visit the site should bear in mind that the whole level expanse of Whitewater Common between Blyth and Styrrup was not drained till little more than a century ago, when the broad

Whitewater drain was cut midway across it. In the tournament days, therefore, the Common must have been a water-logged morass. But the gentle slope of the hill above Styrrup would provide excellent standing-room for the humbler spectators who came to witness the prowess of the gallants from Tickhill,



The Bell at Barnby Moor.

Coninsborough, Worksop, and other castles and manors still further afield.

Three miles to the south-east of Blyth, on the Great North Road, is the Bell at Barnby Moor. Its real name is the Blue Bell Inn, but everyone knows it as the Bell, and to call it an Hotel is sheer snobbishness. It rose to fame when the stage coaches started to run early in the eighteenth century. There was

keen competition for custom on the roads and as Scrooby declined in importance, Barnby Moor began to flourish. Be it remembered that the Great North Road at that time did not pass through Retford. Coming from the north, therefore, there was no township of any sort between Barnby Moor and Tuxford and for most of the journey the road hardly passed through a village. There was an excellent opening, therefore, for a good inn and the landlords of the Bell rose to the occasion and supplied the need.

Ralph Thoresby, the pious antiquary and historian of Leeds, was at Barnby Moor in 1680, when he was a young man of twenty-three. He was returning home from London with other company and was riding horseback. He and his friends had been sight-seeing at Newark and had planned to reach Barnby Moor by night. But one of the party, a certain Mr. Hutton, was somewhat "too full of drink," and, while looking after him, Thoresby left the road—"the way and weather being very bad"—and lost his companions. Arrived at Tuxford, Hutton very wisely refused to stir another foot, so Thoresby had "to ride alone eight tedious long miles in a place easy enough to mistake the way in, especially in a dark evening over Shirewood Forest, but through the mercy of a good God I got safe to my destined stage and before the rest of the company." He does not mention the Bell by name, but there is little doubt where he rested his tired limbs that night. Fifteen years later, in 1695, he was sleeping at the Bell again on his way to London and passed "a weary night," before rising early to ride to Newark. When next he came that way in 1714 he was travelling by coach, and in 1723 he notes that there were so many coaches at the Bell that "some were ill put to it for lodgings, but by the management of Mr. Barwell we got a chamber and two beds." By 1727 Barnby Moor was already celebrated as "a famous baiting place for the stage coaches which pass between London and York."

So much for Ralph Thoresby. In 1769 a still more famous man was passing through Barnby Moor and making notes of what he saw. This was Arthur Young, who was gathering material for his "Northern Tour," in which he gives a vivid picture of the state of English agriculture. He noted at Barnby that oxen were used for ploughing and that they were reputed locally to be far better than horses.

In 1776 the Rev. Thomas Twining, who was making a post-chaise tour for pleasure, described the Bell as "a gentleman-like, comfortable house," and advised his correspondent to make a note of the fact for future use. "It may be useful to you," he wrote, "to know that in your future travels." And sixteen years later he again praised the Bell as "the most comfortable and private public house, take it altogether, that I was ever at."

The most celebrated landlord of the Bell was Mr. George Clarke, who from 1800 to 1842 was known to every traveller over that stretch of the Great North Road. He was a man of strong personality, so highly respected that he was a Commissioner of several enclosures, and his judgment on all matters relating to the Turf was much sought after. "Sylvanus," a well known sporting writer, described him as "the gentleman innkeeper" famous for his anecdotes and conversational powers, and "when free from gout, a tough customer over the mahogany." Clarke was not only landlord and coach proprietor, but farmer, sportsman and horse breeder, and every traveller looked forward to catching the first glimpse of the four elms which used to stand before the inn on the other side of the road. Charles James Apperley, the celebrated "Nimrod," thus rhapsodises over a breakfast at the Bell after an all-night run from Huntingdon :—

"But the breakfast at Barnby Moor, the next morning at eight o'clock! That was a still greater treat, for at no nobleman's castle in the country could a better have been provided. When I was last there the celebrated Mr. Clarke—celebrated for his breed of cattle and his horses, as well as for his larder and cellar—kept it, and I was glad to find the reputation of the house was not about to suffer by the change of landlord, which is saying a good deal in this case."

In Clarke's days there was stable room for 120 horses, and beds for 60 post boys, and the Bell must have hummed with activity from morning to night. The best horse Clarke ever bred was Sweetmeat, which at the sale of his stock, on his retirement, sold as a yearling for 10 guineas. The horse won the Doncaster Cup in 1845 and Lord George Bentinck, its owner, refused 4,000 guineas for him. Clarke may be said to have been happy in the occasion of his death. He left a fine fortune, but his successor, Inett, was ruined. The Great Northern Railway, running close at hand, soon cleared all the coaches

off the roads and with them vanished the posting business. A big inn at Barnby Moor was ridiculous when the roads were empty, for of local custom there was none. Its fate was not even gradual, like that of so many famous coaching houses in the small country towns. It collapsed at once. The house was bought by a Mr. Beevor, who surrendered the licence. The old entrance through the arch into the yard behind was closed up—though the arch is still visible inside the house—and for about sixty years the Bell was in private occupation. For a time it was actually divided into two houses. There was then no church in the little village and so a chapel was formed out of part of the inn and was approached by a flight of outside stone steps. In recent years this has been transformed into bedrooms, the centre aisle being now the corridor between the rooms on either side.

Four elms used to shade the inn from the opposite side of the road, but when one fell and knocked off a corner of the building the rest were cut down for safety, and the pond at their side was filled up. Now an ornamental strip of garden has been laid out in their place. In front of the present annexe stood a row of commonplace cottages. These were demolished a few years ago when the Bell was bought by an architect, who made it his hobby to revive the fortunes of famous coaching houses which had fallen on evil days.

Serlby Hall, 1830.
From an engraving by W. Radclyffe, from a drawing by J. P. Neale.

CHAPTER XXI

SERLBY; SCROOBY; BAWTRY

LEAVING Blyth, let us take the road towards Barnby Moor for half a mile to the fine old mill at a sharp elbow of the Ryton, and, where the road forks, turn up the lane towards Ranskill. This rises to a lodge giving entrance to Serlby Park, the residence of Viscount Galway, and though there are many bigger and grander parks in the county, Serlby is full of charm. It has woods and glades and vistas, and glorious beeches and oaks, and in spring, as I saw it, the ground was blue with the shimmer of blue-bells in the plantations near the lodge, and every bird's throat was bursting with song. Half a mile along the drive brings you to the next lodge gate, just beyond which a distant peep may be obtained of the hall, standing square and rather solemn at the end of a long vista. Then the drive describes a sweeping curve through the park till it issues below the mansion itself, which is set on rising ground.

The park is private, and permission to enter must be asked, but if that be refused, take the rough green track which skirts

the park boundary from the side of the first lodge. On the Ordnance map this is marked Roman Bank, and the whole bank on the park side is clearly artificial. The work is best seen beyond the second lodge where there is a deep wide trench with the earth thrown up into ramparts, exactly similar to the well-known Grimm's Dyke in Middlesex and Buckinghamshire. The books throw no light on what seems a boundary mark or a fortification rather than a bank, for it is carried at an elevation of fifty feet above the river level, and at no time could there have been danger of flooding. The banks are now planted with handsome trees at regular intervals, and the old work keeps the secret of its makers to itself. It is called Roman, but it is much more likely to have been the handiwork of Danes or Mercians than of Roman soldiers.

The Serlby estate has been in the hands of its present owners for nearly two centuries. It was one of the possessions of the Chaworths before its purchase in 1722 by John Monckton, who married a daughter of the second Duke of Rutland and was raised to the peerage for his fidelity to the Hanoverian Succession. Yet he was the grandson of the gallant Sir Philip Monckton, knighted by Charles I. in 1643 for valour in the field, whom we have already met in the hour of misfortune at Willoughby-in-the-Wolds. The Moncktons were originally a Yorkshire family, but for two centuries they have had their principal residence at Serlby. The house, which is not shown, contains several fine pictures, two of which have interesting histories. One is a large canvas by Daniel Mytens, depicting Charles I. and his Queen, and the dwarf Hudson. This was given by Queen Anne to Addison, from whom it passed to Richard Arundel, and from him to his nephew the second Viscount Galway. The other is Holbein's portrait of Kreutzer, astronomer to Henry VIII. This belonged to Addison's wife, the Countess of Warwick. It passed from her to the Eyres of Hassop, in Derbyshire, and from them by marriage to one of the Moncktons. The best views of the park from the house are from the south side; on the north is a broad terrace, and the prospects over the Ryton river towards Blyth and Styrrup are most delightful.

From Serlby we turn towards Scrooby. The pleasantest way is to follow the Roman Bank track from the third lodge. This soon makes a sharp twist to the right, rises rather steeply and then drops straight down into the Great North Road. Nor

could you easily find a sharper contrast than between the big highway to Scotland, along which the traffic goes roaring and humming with a great railway close at hand, and the quiet by-way by which it is entered. A featureless three-quarters of a mile brings us to Scrooby, and Scrooby, dull and uninteresting as it looks from this approach—it is vastly more attractive from the Bawtry side—is a place of history. Motorists scarcely see the real Scrooby, for they pass along the broad, straight cut specially made for the fast coach traffic about a century ago. The original road wound through the little village by the church.

Scrooby has two titles to fame. It has associations with Wolsey, through the old house of the Archbishops of York which stood here for centuries, and associations also with Brewster and Bradford, two of the leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed for the New World in the *Mayflower* in 1620. And by a curious chance these associations are intertwined, for Brewster is believed to have lived in a portion of the archiepiscopal residence, which even in his day was fast falling into ruin. This, therefore, is the centre of historical interest in Scrooby. But unhappily there is little or nothing to see except an open field, with the tumbled irregular mounds and uneven surface which so often betoken an ancient site. It lies near the river, close to the railway station, on the outskirts of the village. At one side stands a farm-house of respectable age, but this is not so much a relic as a mere fragment of a relic. A tall recessed arch in one of the walls is its only interesting feature, and the best that can be said of it is that it may have formed part of an outbuilding. But no one can speak authoritatively on the subject, for no one knows. In the farm garden is a mulberry tree, which Wolsey is said to have planted, but even a century ago the legend was laughed at as a tale told to the credulous. No doubt, there were many mulberry trees in the old garden, and this is the descendant of one of them.

In its prime, the house was a noble building, standing in ground given by John Earl of Chester in 1170 to the Archbishop of York of his day and designed for the enjoyment of his successors for ever. It was used by them as a resting place when they travelled between York and London, or when they desired a change. Leland, who was here in 1541, describes it as consisting of two courts, built of timber. There appear, at the

time of Cromwell's visitation in 1535, to have been thirty-nine chambers, with a banqueting hall "ceiled and dressed with waynscot," and a chapel with "one lectionary and superellers, a payer of organs, a clock without plometts and ropes." Cromwell, of course, was looking round at everything with an appraiser's eye. Wolsey himself came on to Scrooby from Southwell, where we saw him in the sore distress, but quiet dignity, of his fall.

The house at Scrooby was not alienated from the Archbishops of York at the Reformation, but that fate befell it at the hands of Archbishop Sandys a few years later. Sandys had a large family and thought it his duty to provide for them out of the estates of the Church. So he devised a lease of four livings —including Scrooby—to his eldest son, Sir Samuel Sandys, and the ancient house remained in the lay hands of the Sandys family until 1676 and lost for ever all connection with the See of York. With the Sandys the Brewsters appear on the scene. One brother Henry was vicar of Sutton-cum-Scrooby in 1565; another brother, William, became bailiff to Sir Samuel Sandys and was appointed "Post". His official duty was to keep two horses ready at any moment to take the road between Doncaster and Tuxford and convey the "two bags of leather" which served the purposes of the mail. Whether the William Brewster, who afterwards came to fame, was son of the vicar or son of the "Post" is doubtful. Born in 1566 and "seasoned with the seeds of grace and virtue" at Cambridge, he became—doubtless through the influence of Sandys—attached to the service of Davison, one of the Queen's Secretaries of State, when on an important mission to the Low Countries. On his return Davison fell from favour and young Brewster retired to his native place at Scrooby, where, renouncing all thought of future ambition, he was glad to settle down as "Post." The official salary was 2od. a day, raised to 2s. in 1603, but there was also profit to be made by letting horses to private travellers and providing them with entertainment at the inn. In a word, the office was one of some importance and its holder was on terms of intimacy with Sir Edwin Sandys, who lived at the Archbishop's house, at that time called the manor house. For twenty years Brewster remained "Post" at Scrooby, until he resigned in 1607.

How, then, did he come to be a Pilgrim Father? The answer

is that he had grown dissatisfied with some of the doctrines, and still more with certain features of the organisation, of the Church of England as by law established. He had been brought into contact with the teaching of Robert Browne, the founder of the first sect of separatists from the Reformed Church. Browne objected to episcopal ordination and to the parochial system, though strangely enough his principles did not prevent him from being Rector of Achurch, in Northants, for more than forty years. It would seem, indeed, that while Browne himself mitigated the violence of his earlier views, his disciples clung to them and even carried them to the point of separation from the Church. But though the views were violent there was no violence in their expression. The Brownist party was composed of quiet, godly men, who aimed rather at avoiding than seeking publicity. One of the leaders in this district of North Nottinghamshire was the Rev. Richard Clifton, of Babworth, near Retford, a grave and fatherly old man with a great white beard, who was their spiritual minister. Scrooby was found to be a convenient centre and the little band usually met at Brewster's house. "With great love," wrote Bradford, "he entertained them when they came, making provision for them to his great charge," and sometimes even "beyond his ability". Bradford himself constantly made one of the party, for he lived only a few miles away at Austerfield, just over the Yorkshire border beyond Bawtry, and the meetings seem to have been held for several years without molestation, partly no doubt owing to their obscurity and partly to the protection of the lord of the manor. As for Brewster, he is described by his friend as possessing "a singular good gift in prayer, both public and private, in lifting up the heart and conscience before God and in the humble confession of sin and begging the mercies of God in Christ for the pardon of the same."

What made these godly men resolve that there was no longer room for them at home we do not know, nor what active proceedings—if any—were taken to render their lives intolerable. All that is known is that Brewster was fined for recusancy. This was not a very serious persecution, but he and his friends may have had reason to fear that worse was to follow. So they decided to seek a home in the Low Countries, which would be well known to Brewster from the days he had spent there with Davison. They, therefore, chartered a ship at Boston, and tried

to get away without attracting notice. But they were no sooner on board than the skipper robbed them of all their money and handed them over to the authorities, who put them in prison for attempted escape from the jurisdiction of their lawful sovereign. Eventually they were released, and in the following spring they arranged with a Dutch sea-captain to meet them at a point between Grimsby and Hull, where there was a large common some way distant from any town. But fortune was against them. The company safely reached the rendezvous and the women were put on board a small bark to be transferred to the ship which had not yet come in sight. But the weather was rough, and as all the women were sea-sick, the bark was beached in a creek off the river, and was left high and dry as the tide receded. Eventually the ship came up and some of the men got aboard, but when the skipper saw a troop of people advancing over the common to see what was taking place, he swore a great oath and set sail and was off, leaving most of the party still ashore. These were sent back home for the second time, and those who made a third attempt to emigrate stole away singly, to prevent another fiasco. Meanwhile, the others, including Brewster, reached their destination after an adventurous voyage and settled down, first at Amsterdam, where they were joined by Clifton in the following year, and afterwards at Leyden. Clifton died in 1616, and Robinson, of Lincoln, became leader of the little community. Finally, Holland grew distasteful to them, and resolving to seek the larger liberty of the New World, they sailed from Plymouth Harbour in the *Mayflower* in 1620, after Brewster had visited London in the previous year to negotiate with Sir Edwyn Sandys for a tract of land in Virginia, of which he was Governor.

So we may take leave of Brewster as a Pilgrim Father ploughing his way to the New World. To-day the pilgrimage is reversed, and scores of Americans every year visit Scrooby to see the village where Brewster was born, and gaze at the fragment of the house where he may perhaps have lived, and admire a few fragments of the pew in which he may possibly have worshipped. Faith, in the famous schoolboy definition, is the faculty which enables us to believe that which we know is not true. One must have a full share of that faculty to enjoy the sights of Scrooby, as, for example, the so-called vicarage house at the corner of the churchyard, the room at the manor house " where Brewster

sate," and the Brewster pew in the church itself. There is nothing whatever to show that the pew was Brewster's. If it was the best pew in the church, it is far more probable that it belonged to Sir Edwyn Sandys.

But the church is well worth a visit for its own sake. The exterior is pleasant, without being at all remarkable. The interior has been very much restored, and according to all accounts restoration was badly needed. For listen to this outspoken description of Scrooby church, which is to be found in Miller's "History of Doncaster," in 1804. He says:—

"In my visits to the different churches mentioned in this book I have not met with so dirty, so indecent a place as this building. It has exactly the appearance of an old barn or lumber room. The chancel is chiefly the receptacle for logs of wood, old balks, fragments of stone, ladders, long benches, never used, and all kinds of rubbish. Yet this is the place, enveloped in dirt, where the sacrament of our Lord's Supper is administered. O shame! where is thy blush? Would our clergy condescend to drink their wine in their own habitations surrounded with such filthy furniture? I believe not. Surely then they should use their influence not to have a house of prayer resemble a den of thieves. The poverty of the parishioners cannot be pleaded as an excuse for such neglect, for in this parish are several wealthy farmers, two of whom are generally appointed Churchwardens, and doubtless might be induced by small exertions on the part of the officiating minister to remedy the above abominable evil."

Public opinion was not very sensitive when those indignant words were written, and people were quite accustomed to parish churches being far gone in decay. But it is evident that Scrooby was in a particularly disgraceful condition, inasmuch as in 1727 it was described as being "anciently a very fair church, but now ruinous and decayed." The reason was not far to seek. There was no resident clergyman at Scrooby—for that matter there is none to-day—and it is clear that the rector did not even put in a curate. The spiritual needs of the parish were left to take care of themselves. The church, therefore, decayed as the manor house decayed. First the Archbishops severed their connection with the village; then even the manor house tumbled into ruin and the squire vanished; then, too, the Post became transferred. The inn at Barnby Moor took away whatever custom there was at Scrooby, and between the Bell at Barnby and the Crown at

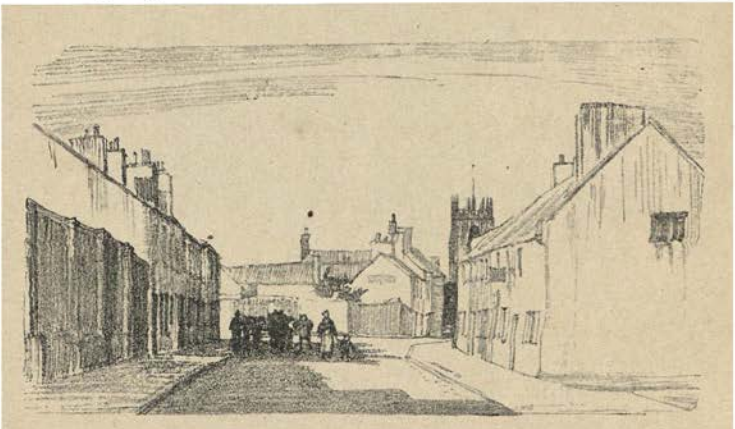
Bawtry there was nothing left for the poor little inn at Scrooby. Finally, the high road disdained it, and a new cut was made which left it stranded and forlorn.

Scrooby also possesses a very picturesque old Monks Mill which straddles the Ryton River with a solid substantial building of red brick. The mill wheel still revolves; the Ryton still performs its last useful, honourable liturgy before it loses its identity in the Idle. We cross the stream by the mill bridge and soon enter the high road. The summit of the gentle eminence before us provides the most attractive view of Scrooby, beyond the marshy swampy land through which the Ryton makes its great meander. Gibbet Hill is the name of this rise and the story is this. The turnpike gate, which stood near by, was kept in 1779 by William Geadon. Late one July night a shepherd called John Spencer came by and rousing the gate-keeper on the pretext that he had some cattle to go through, murdered him with a hedge stake and then went upstairs and murdered the gate-keeper's mother, and took what money there was in the house. Spencer was caught, hanged at Nottingham and suspended in irons on the scene of his crime—an ugly spectacle for all the "outsides" on the coaches going up and down the road. It is said that the stump of the gibbet was to be seen as late as 1833. While the body of this murderer still swung in the creaking irons a company of soldiers happened to march by. The sergeant, to amuse himself, fired a bullet at the corpse and hit it. For this he was tried by court martial and degraded to the ranks. We should hardly have expected the sentiment of the time to be so squeamish.

A quarter of a mile further on, a road comes in from Blyth on the left and another half mile brings us to Bawtry. The good brick hall which is passed on entering the little town has been closely associated in its time with the owners of Serlby. Mr. Pemberton Milnes, who bought the estate from the Listers, married one of the Moncktons, and their son was Mr. Richard Monckton Milnes, a man of considerable note in his day, as squire, politician and litterateur—an excellent example of the solid Victorian merit which frequently raised its possessors, when possessed of means, to the peerage. Mr. Monckton Milnes became Lord Houghton, and the present bearer of that title is the Marquis of Crewe. Bawtry, which happens to be half in Nottinghamshire and half in Yorkshire, and therefore owns a divided

patriotism, is one of those little country towns which disclose their beauties and blemishes at a single glance. It has no secrets to be discovered after long search. There is nothing round the corner. It gives you all its confidence at once as you stroll down its spacious thoroughfare. There you see the Crown, boasting, of course, its garage and the like; there, too, is the next best inn; there is the solicitor's, and there is a shop where you can still buy forage. The only thing you cannot see is the church, which is hidden away down a back street, though it is a very ancient building and its interior is worth a leisurely inspection.

Bawtry is now a petty market town pure and simple, uncomfortably near—for the profit of its shopkeepers—both Doncaster and Retford. Once it was a port of considerable consequence. For, strange as it may seem to us, Sheffield used to send its hardware, and Derbyshire its millstones and pigs of lead, across from Rotherham to Bawtry and ship them on barges down the sluggish Idle and so out into the Trent. Such traffic, of course, is long since dead. The Chesterfield and Trent canal dealt it a heavy blow, and then the railways administered the *coup-de-grâce.*



Church Street, Bawtry.

CHAPTER XXII

EAST RETFORD; RUSHY INN; THE JOCKEY HOUSE; ELKESLEY; MARKHAM CLINTON; EAST MARKHAM; TUXFORD

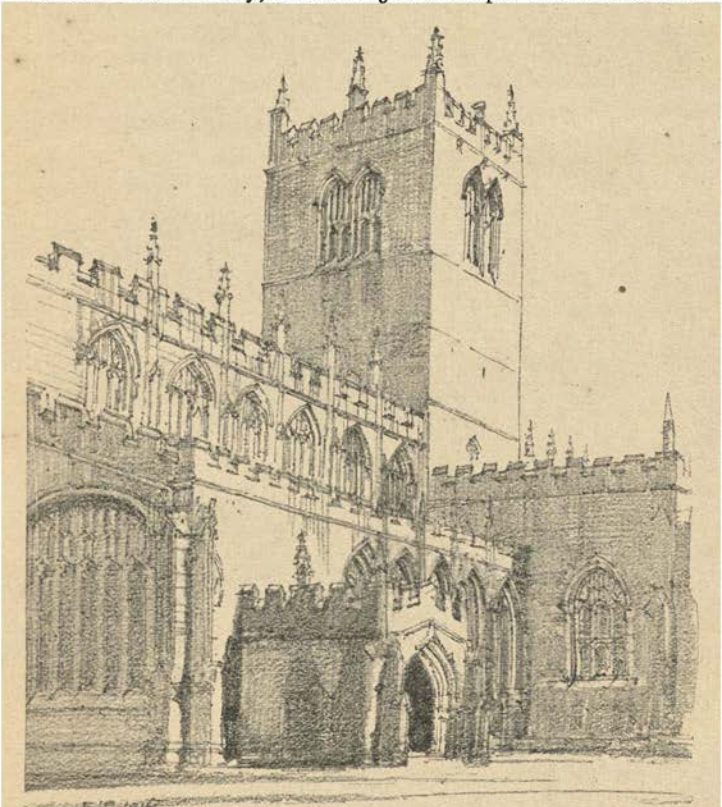
RETFORD, the largest town in the northern part of the county, is an important railway and industrial centre, with large engineering works, and paper and rubber mills. The famous Major Cartwright tried also to establish the worsted industry, but he was before his time, in this as in many other respects, and the enterprise proved a failure. The town really consists of two Retfords, East and West, divided by the river Idle, and two hundred years ago there was an idea of making it an inland port, for in 1719 an Act of Parliament was passed to render the river navigable from Retford to Bawtry. But that, too, was a fiasco. The project was estimated to cost £200,000, but the promoters could only raise £10,000, and though the Retford Corporation did their part by building a lock at Bolham, the scheme ignominiously collapsed, and there was no water-borne traffic on the Idle when James Brindley planned the Chesterfield and Trent canal. This canal, which falls into the Trent at Stockwith, is 46 miles long, and its main object was to carry to the sea the coal, lime and lead of Derbyshire. Authorized in 1769, it was finished by Brindley's brother-in law, Henshall, and opened in 1776, when its immediate economic effect was to reduce the price of coal at Worksop and other places along its banks from 8d. a cwt. to 4½d. The canal was brought across the county from Worksop to Retford, and thence past Clayworth, Wiseton and Misterton out into the Trent at Stockwith.

But even before then the people of Retford had begun to agitate to get into closer touch with the main highway of commerce. When Dr. Pococke, the Oriental traveller, came to Retford in 1751 he reported, "It is a burrough, but no thorough-

fare, and chiefly subsists by hops, market and fairs." The disadvantage of not being a thoroughfare was obvious. The high road from London to York passed two miles to the west. That meant, of course, that Retford lost her share of the valuable coaching business of the road, and that there was little coming and going in her streets and few visitors in her inns. People began to ask why the road should not be diverted, seeing that it would involve no increase in mileage to the traveller, while the benefit to the town was certain to be enormous. So thanks to the influence of Retford's Parliamentary representatives a special Act of Parliament was passed in 1766 authorising the diversion of the road, and then, to quote a local historian, "the vivifying rays of commerce began to shed their invigorating influence over the town and neighbourhood." The change involved the ruin of the small wayside inns on the old route, but to all else it was pure gain. And to none can the gain have been more immediate than to the proprietors of the White Hart, the inn at the corner of the market place at Retford, where the great North Road turns sharply to quit the town. This inn has remained for a century in the hands of the same family of Dennett. William Dennett reigned from 1818 to 1848, Joseph from 1848 to 1890, and Arthur from 1890 to the present day. One of their old post-boys, John Blagg, was for many years a local celebrity, for he went to the White Hart in 1834 and remained there till his death in 1880. His greatest feat was a ride from Retford to York and back in a single day, a distance of 110 miles, no light test of endurance on the back of a post-horse.

The market-place is the chief feature of Retford—a large open square, seen at its best on a fine Saturday morning when it is choked with booths and stalls, and its pavements are lined with scores of antediluvian market carts from the villages around. The Town Hall, which contains some interesting portraits and plate, has no external attractions, and the other houses in the square call for no remark. Immediately in front of the Town Hall is the ancient Broad Stone, thought to be the base of a cross, which used to stand on a little eminence known as Dominie Cross, but called in earlier times Est-Croc-Sic, which is, being interpreted, the east-cross-by-the-dry-ditch. A similar cross survives in the churchyard at West Retford, and a third at Ordsall. The most beautiful building in Retford is the splendid

old parish church of St. Swithun, which occupies a good open position just off the market-place. It was twice burnt out in the sixteenth century, and in 1651 its steeple was blown down



East Retford Church.

in a gale. Cruciform in shape, it consists of nave, two aisles, transepts and chancel, and its square tower rises from above the junction of nave and chancel. There are four bays in each aisle with octagonal pillars and six clerestory windows above them.

Much of the stained glass is disappointing, but there is a beautiful modern window to the memory of the officers and men of the Sherwood Rangers who fell in the South African War; and a charming small light to St. Swithun in the chantry. Two of the windows on the north side at the west end are of special interest, for they were presented by an old inmate of the neighbouring almshouses, out of the monies given to him by strangers to whom he showed the church. The solitary monument of interest is that which records the charities of Robt. Sutton (d. 1776), who in 1720 was Secretary of Embassy to the Congress at Cambrai, and afterwards Gentleman Usher to Queen Caroline. He gave £100 towards building the Town Hall, £100 to the Barnby Common Road, and bequeathed a share in the Chesterfield canal to the benefit of the poor of East Retford for ever. It would be interesting to know to what extent the poor of East Retford have benefitted from that last bequest. The canal was opened in the year that the testator died, and for many years afterwards it was doubtless a highly profitable investment. On some canals the £100 shares appreciated forty-fold—in the Loughborough Canal, for example, the £140 shares rose to £4,500, and remained at that price for twenty years. Those who held the original stock grew rich beyond the dreams of avarice, but the subsequent fall was terrific when the railways came on the scene.

Retford's Parliamentary history is well worth a passing allusion. Since 1885 the township has been merged in the county division of Bassetlaw. But for about five centuries East Retford had the right to send two Members to Parliament, though from 1330 to 1571 the privilege was not exercised by the freemen, who wished to escape the obligation of supporting their burgesses. The franchise was restricted to "such freemen only as have a right to their freedom by birth, as eldest sons of freemen, or by serving seven years' apprenticeship, or have it by redemption, whether inhabiting or not inhabiting at the time of their being made free." It is not surprising, therefore, that East Retford was a corrupt Borough, and the established custom in the eighteenth century was for those who voted for the two successful candidates to receive 40 guineas. The last election under the old system took place in 1826, when the result of the poll, after tumultuous scenes, which led to the military being summoned, was declared as follows:—

Mr. W. B. Wrightson	120
Sir Robt. Dundas	118
Sir H. W. Wilson	53

Sir Henry Wilson petitioned, and the Parliamentary Committee —for at that time election petitions were heard not by Petition Judges, as at present, but by a Parliamentary Committee appointed for the purpose—reported that the two successful candidates had been guilty of treating, and, therefore, were not duly elected. Thereupon Mr. Tennyson introduced a Bill to disfranchise East Retford and transfer its two representatives to the town of Birmingham, which had no member, while Mr. Nicholson Calvert moved a counter-proposition that East Retford should retain its representation, and bribery and corruption be prevented in future by extending the franchise to the 40*s.* freeholders of the Hundred of Bassetlaw. This latter proposal was eventually carried by a majority of 18, and so, from 1828 to 1885, the enlarged constituency of East Retford continued to send its two members to Parliament.

The debates in both Houses of Parliament on the East Retford Petition make amusing reading. It was stated in evidence, and not denied, that packets of money were left at the houses of voters at dead of night by unknown and mysterious messengers. Ninety-seven such packets were said to have been traced, and the friends of East Retford triumphantly pointed to the fact that even on the worst computation there was a large majority of pure over corrupt electors, whereas in other rotten boroughs, such as Shoreham, Cricklade, Aylesbury, and Grampound, which had been the subject of Disfranchisement Bills, the majorities had been the other way. One of the chief witnesses had bolted from the town without paying his ale-house bills; another was proved to have made a will for a man in a lunatic asylum. Perhaps the most candid utterance on the subject was made by a member of the House of Lords, who put the matter thus:—

"Now, my lords, as to the amount of this corruption—suppose that those persons did receive twenty or forty guineas each, and that £3,000 or £4,000 was distributed amongst them, I say it is as a drop of water in the ocean, compared with the sums spent in elections. Mr. Evans himself tells us, that he spent £17,000 at Leicester; and it is pretty well known that at the

last election for Northumberland £140,000 was spent, not in legal expenses only, but in treating and other illegal inducements to voting. At my own election in the county of Durham, I had to spend about £30,000; and a noble friend of mine, a noble marquis opposite, must have spent a great deal more. At the election for Yorkshire in 1826, although there was no contest, £100,000 was spent by the four candidates—a fact which was mentioned in the other House of Parliament by one of the members. In the election of 1806 for the same county, Lord Milton spent £100,000; another party £90,000; and the committee who acted for Mr. Wilberforce, £60,000: indeed, the expenses of even an uncontested election for Yorkshire are so notorious, that there is at this moment the greatest difficulty to find members to represent it; and I believe that, except one of the present members, and a gentleman little known to the freeholders of the county, no other individuals have declared themselves candidates for the expensive honour of representing it. In fact, with the exception of Westminster, there is hardly a place in England where it is not necessary for a candidate who seriously intends to succeed, to spend a considerable sum of money. Whatever the theory of the representation may be, it has in practice come to this, that either directly or indirectly, covertly or openly, every man comes into Parliament by a breach of the law."

That, indeed, was the simple truth, and when the market price of a seat in the House of Commons was £1,800 a year, when the freehold of a borough like Gatton was actually bought for £180,000, and the practice of creating fictitious votes and qualifications on the day of election was notorious, there was no room for one party to throw stones at the other. The whole system was rotten to the core and cried aloud for reform.

From Retford our way lies south towards Tuxford, and the obvious route, of course, is to take the Great North Road, which is direct, straight and dusty. But it is much more profitable for those who have leisure to make a more circuitous journey, starting along the Worksop road to the pretty village of Babworth, and then turning off on the left and joining the Old North Road at the side of two cottages which still bear the name of the Rushy Inn from old association, though it is long since the place was an inn. Here is a fine half-mile stretch of the old road, now a wide green track, and the old brick cottages are what is left,

much transformed, of the Rushy Inn, where the coaches used to drop the mails for Retford. One of the rooms is still called Dick Turpin's Room, but tradition has failed to add any other detail of the highwayman's presence. The most splendid day in the history of the Rushy Inn was in 1503, when the bailiffs and aldermen of Retford and a goodly company of the townspeople gathered there to greet the young Princess, Margaret Tudor, on her way north to marry James IV. of Scotland. Henry VII's daughter was only fourteen at the time and her

Babworth.

long journey from Richmond to Edinburgh was "roses, roses all the way," so popular was the match, and so high the national hopes founded upon it. That day the Princess had come from Tuxford and was on her way to Scrooby, and the people of Retford gathered here to wish her good luck, with the waits playing on viols "right merrilye" and "two mynstrells" to supply a song, and plenty of Malmsey, red wine and ale for the Royal Suite. Princess Margaret is said to have been mightily pleased with the honour done to her, and it must have been a pretty scene, as the procession swept down the road to the inn. And no wonder it drew the whole countryside, for the marriage was intended to establish between the two countries of England and Scotland "a good real, sincere, true, sound

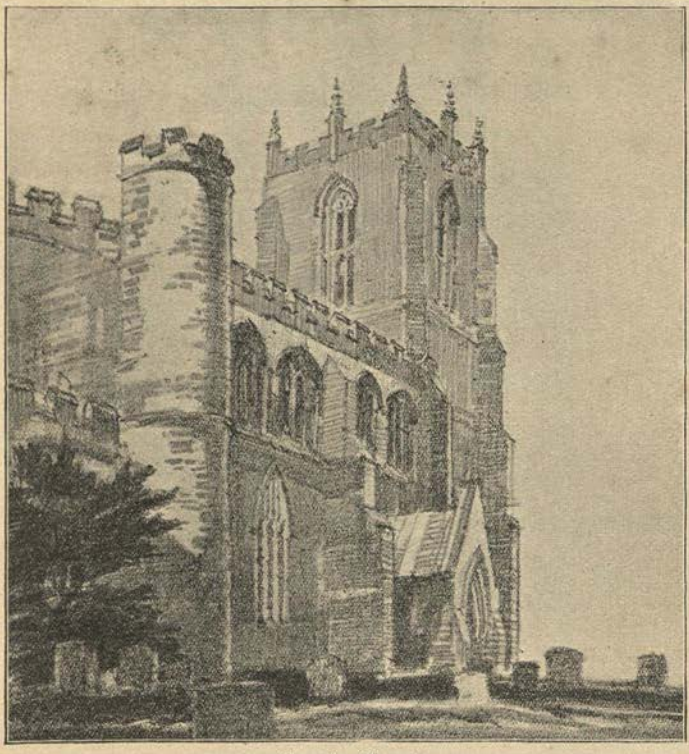
and firm peace, friendship, league and confederation to last to all time coming." The bad old days of feud, invasion and counter-invasion were declared at an end, and the poet Dunbar wrote a right royal welcome to

> Our princess of honour,
> Our pearl, our pleasaunce, and our paramour,
> Our peace, our play, our plain felicity,
> Christ thee conserve from all adversity.

And yet, just ten years later, on September 9, 1513, was fought the battle of Flodden, where the Scottish King fell with his Scottish nobles thick about him, and nearly the whole chivalry of Scotland went down. The Princess was a widow, and Scotland was plunged into the troubles of another long minority. In the ten years that had intervened Henry VIII had ascended the throne of England. He was at war with France, and the popular feeling in Scotland was strong on the side of France against the hereditary enemy. And so King James IV. was driven by his own people to declare war upon his brother-in-law and lead his army to the border. "He has paid a heavier penalty for his perfidy than we would have wished," was Henry's comment when he heard the news. Such was one sequel to that gay bridal procession through Sherwood Forest in 1503. Yet we must not forget a later and happier consequence, for just a century after the marriage James VI. came south to unite the crowns of England and Scotland.

From the Rushy Inn the road rises to the level crossing over the Great Central Railway, and then traverses a wide plateau which affords a sweeping view across to the dark woods of Clumber. It is a lonely road, for all the traffic has gone, and it is difficult to realise that this was for centuries the high road to Scotland. As soon as the clustered farmstead of Little Morton is passed, scarcely a house is in sight for two miles till you reach the Jockey House. This, too, as the name suggests, was an inn in the old days. It is set at the oblique angle to the road which many such inns affected, and three ancient elms, closely pollarded, lend a picturesque appearance to the low long front of the two-storeyed farm-house. This wayside inn was the scene of a melancholy tragedy one June day in 1721. A company of the Guards, riding southward, halted at the Jockey House for refreshments. One of the officers, named Midford Hendry, entered the inn and sat down by the side of a gentleman named

John Baragh, who also was resting from his journey. They began to talk politics—a dangerous topic for strangers to enter upon when there were still ardent Jacobites in the land—and in the quarrel which ensued Hendry drew his sword and plunged



Gamston Church.

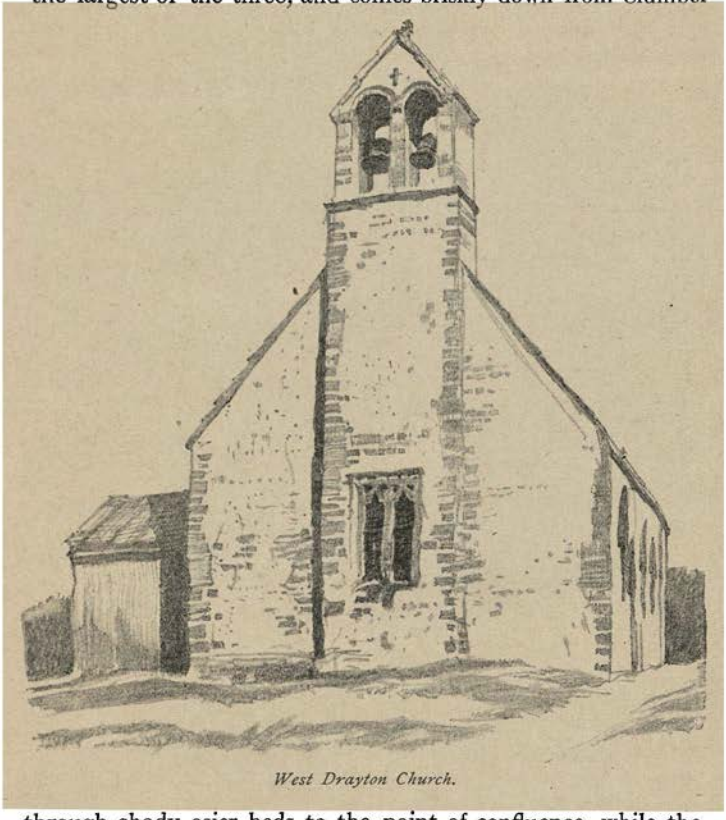
it into the side of Baragh, stabbing him to the heart. One can picture the excitement and confusion, the agitation of the innkeeper, the amazement of the soldiers and, we hope, the remorse of the murderer. They took the body to Elkesley and buried it there, and recorded on the gravestone that "John Baragh, gentleman, was murdered by Midford Hendry, officer of the Guards."

What happened to the murderer? He was tried at the Nottingham Assizes before Mr. Justice Powis, and an account of the trial was published as a pamphlet, but I have not been able to discover a copy or any other record, and so cannot say what was the finding of the jury and the sentence of the judge.

Elkesley Church Porch.

Just beyond the Jockey House a footpath on the right will conduct you through a few intervening fields to Elkesley, a plain little village with a plain grey church of no distinction, the old font of which does service as a pump trough. But unless hunger drives you thither, Elkesley is hardly worth the detour, and it is better to continue along the old road which in another mile drops down a steepish hill by a green rough track between

two spick and span roads of the utmost modernity. The foot of this hill is a regular waters-meet, for just below Twyford bridge the Poulter, the Meden, and the Maun merge their several streams and thenceforth become the Idle. The Poulter is much the largest of the three, and comes briskly down from Clumber



West Drayton Church.

through shady osier beds to the point of confluence, while the Meden and the Maun, which have already joined and parted company again a few miles earlier, here meet and mingle with no further bickering. Beyond the bridge a beautifully wooded lane leads towards Clumber, but we keep to the highway through

West Drayton—the little aisleless church, picturesquely standing amid cottage gardens off the main road, has an outside stoup still in use by the Norman south door—and so on over the Maun into the Great North Road at Markham Moor.

But those who are still in no hurry to reach Tuxford, instead of going forward into the Great North Road, will make still another short detour. After crossing the Maun, they will note a house on the left which still clings to its name of the Old Eel

Markham Moor.

Pie House, once known to every coaching traveller for the excellence of its pies. Just beyond this a lane leads down by the side of a pretty house on the right, and those who take this way will soon find themselves in the flowery hamlet of Milton. The church of Milton and Markham Clinton—the adjoining village—is set on high ground up the first road on the left, and at its side is a spacious rectory, with stabling for a score of horses, for it was built for a hunting parson with a large income. The church, approached from Markham Clinton by a beautiful avenue, is a conspicuous landmark. It consists of a gleaming white temple in

the Greek style, with a sort of pseudo-spire surmounted by a great copper ball. It was built for one of the Dukes of Newcastle from a design by Sir Richard Smirke, whose work has now fallen out of fashion and favour. This church is one of the worst of Smirke's failures, and when I saw it every bit of woodwork looked as if it had been newly dipped in glaring brown paint, and even the font had suffered the same fate. The mausoleum attached to the east end of the church is still more dreary. You enter a domed and classic hall, which gives access to two spacious chambers. In these it was the founder's evident intention that the memorials of his family should be placed. But his descendants have judged otherwise. There are several unhappy mausoleum failures up and down the country, and this is one of the most unredeemed. The two solitary memorials are those of the founder and his wife.

That of the Duchess has a pathetic interest of its own. Georgiana Elizabeth Duchess of Newcastle died in childbirth at the age of thirty-three. During her short married life she bore the Duke fourteen children, and died in giving birth to twins. The young mother is represented by the sculptor as clasping the two infants in her arms, while she strives to raise herself from the bed and follow another daughter, portrayed on a tablet above in the act of winging her way to heaven. Such a memorial is hardly in the modern taste—though that, of course, is no necessary condemnation—but the sentiment and its expression, alike in the marble and in the inscription, are typical of early nineteenth century piety. The inscription runs as follows:—"She gave birth to fourteen children, ten of whom live to deplore the bereavement of an incomparable mother. Of the others Anna Maria preceded her by a few months, and it is humbly hoped led the way to regions of eternal bliss. Two infants were carried with their parent to the grave. In pious affection and lasting gratitude her widowed husband erected this monument to her memory." The Duchess, whose untimely death is thus celebrated, was the heiress of the Mundys, a well-known Derbyshire family, and she brought to Henry Pelham, the Fourth Duke of Newcastle, a splendid dowry. The Duke's own memorial—he survived the Duchess for twenty-nine years—stands opposite. It contains no effigy of himself. The tablet merely records his name and the dates of his birth and death, but two life-size supporters, in scanty clothing and

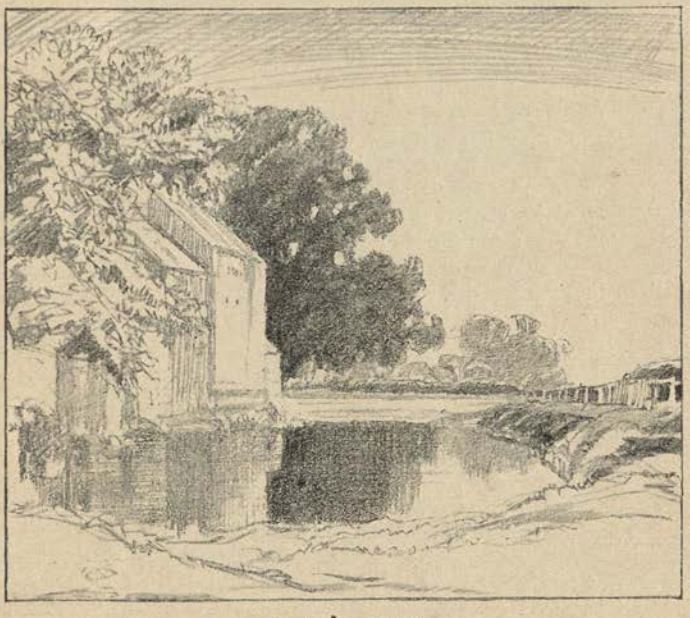
grotesque head-dress, bend modest and downcast eyes upon the floor.

It will be seen that the Duke died in 1851. But he came perilously near to death in 1823, and was actually laid out as a corpse. The story, which is a very curious one, is recorded by Reeve, of *Quarterly Review* fame, as having been told him by Lady Clanricarde at a dinner party. They were talking of the death which had just occurred of Sir Matthew Tierney, the famous doctor, and Lady Clanricarde recounted an incident in Tierney's career which had occurred many years before:—

"News came from Clumber that the Duke of Newcastle was dangerously ill with typhus fever. Tierney was sent down as fast as post-horses could carry him. It was about 1823, in the pre-railway days, and when he arrived he was informed that the Duke had been dead about two hours. Shocked at this intelligence he desired to see the corpse, which was already laid out. At his first glance he thought he was dead. At the second he doubted it. At the third he cried out, 'Bring me a bucket of brandy!' They tore the clothes off the body and swathed it in a sheet imbibed with brandy, and then resorted to friction with brandy. In rather more than an hour symptoms of life began to manifest themselves, and in two hours the Duke was able to swallow. He recovered and lived twenty-four years afterwards."

The old church at Markham Clinton, discarded when Smirke's unfortunate building was completed, lies half a mile down the avenue. It stands, not indeed in actual ruin, but in most pitiful abandonment, and has been swept absolutely bare, save for one recumbent effigy in stone. It was a typical village church, beautifully placed in a road angle, and if only the Duke of Newcastle had spent upon its repair a quarter of the sum he expended on the new building, it might have stood for centuries more. Doubtless, it was all done for the best, but there can be no two opinions now as to the deplorable mistake that was made. Here at the old church we are close to the Great North Road, and from the point of junction a lane leads down to East Markham. From this village the Markhams sprang, and theirs is a family which has produced many men of considerable note. One of these, Sir John Markham, was the Judge who drew up the legal instrument for the deposition of the unfortunate Richard II. His tomb is in the chancel of the parish church.

His son, another Sir John, was Lord Chief Justice of England from 1462 to 1471. A branch of the family settled at Ollerton, as we have seen; another settled at Cotham; and the name, it may be observed, was again prominent in the recent politics of the county. One of the minor celebrities of East Markham is the lady who wrote the once well-known history book for children



At East Markham.

called "Mrs. Markham's History of England." She was a Miss Elizabeth Cartwright, and took the *nom-de-plume* of "Mrs. Markham" from her birthplace. The book was first published in 1823, and ran through hosts of editions down to 1873. Now its day is done. The authoress was the daughter of Dr. Edward Cartwright, of Marnham, a neighbouring village, who, in 1786, invented the power loom. He had suggested to Arkwright that he should "set his wits to work to invent

a weaving mill" and Arkwright had assured him that the thing was impossible. But Cartwright was not discouraged, and set his own brilliant invention to work on the problem :—

"It struck me that, as in plain weaving, according to the conception I then had of the business, there could only be three movements, which were to follow each other in succession, there would be little difficulty in producing and repeating them. Full of these ideas, I immediately employed a carpenter and smith to carry them into effect. As soon as the machine was finished, I got a weaver to put in the warp, which was of such materials as sail-cloth is usually made of. To my great delight, a piece of cloth, such as it was, was the product. As I had never before turned my thoughts to anything mechanical, either in theory or practice, nor had ever seen a loom at work, or knew anything of its construction, you will readily suppose that my first loom was a most rude piece of machinery. The warp was placed perpendicularly, the reed fell with the weight of at least half a hundredweight, and the springs which threw the shuttle were strong enough to have thrown a Congreve rocket. In short, it required the strength of two powerful men to work the machine at a slow rate, and only for a short time. Conceiving, in my great simplicity, that I had accomplished all that was required, I then secured what I thought a most valuable property, by a patent, 4th of April, 1785. This being done, I then condescended to see how other people wove ; and you will guess my astonishment when I compared their easy modes of operation with mine. Availing myself, however, of what I then saw, I made a loom, in its general principles nearly as they are now made. But it was not till the year 1787 that I completed my invention, when I took out my last weaving patent, August 1st of that year."

It is often said that poets are not practical men, but Cartwright is a standing example to the contrary, though it must be confessed that his poetry was poor stuff. He belonged to a remarkable family. One of his brothers was known to the day of his death as "Labrador" Cartwright, from his voyages of discovery to that country. He was a giant in stature and a mighty eater, whose conception of a leg of mutton was that it served for two slices at table. Another brother, John, started life in the Navy but quitted the service, in which he was already

favourably known as a competent and efficient officer, rather than serve against the American colonists. Lord Howe offered him a ship, which he declined for conscience' sake, yet retained the respect and friendship of the Admiral. Then he joined the Nottinghamshire Militia and was always known as Major Cartwright, even after he was compelled to resign his commission owing to the unpopularity of his political views in high

East Markham Church.

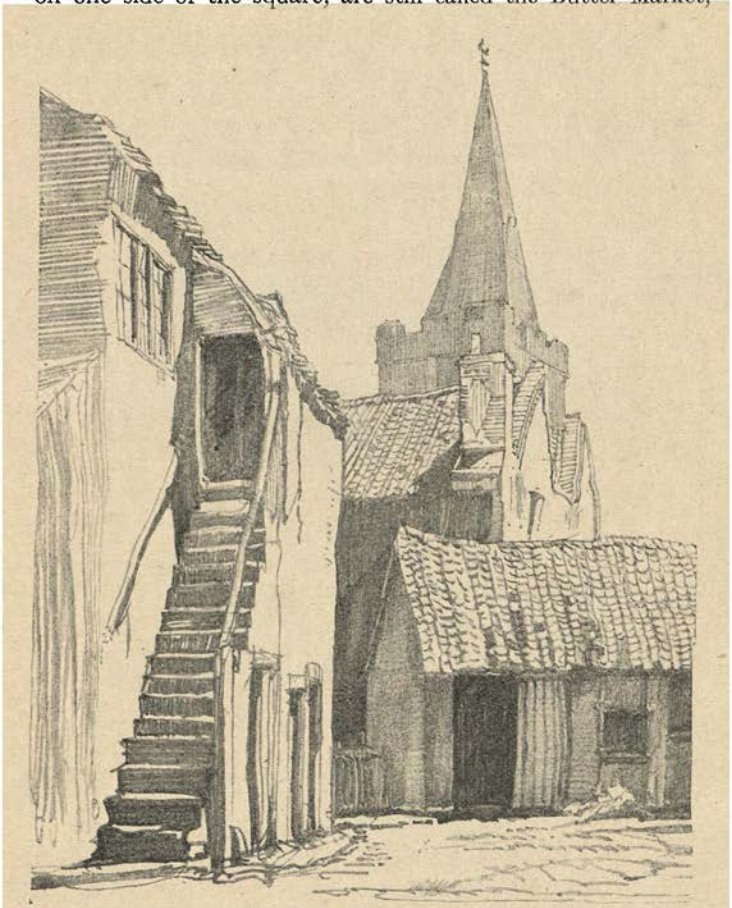
quarters. He was one of the earliest Radicals. Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, the Ballot, One Man one Vote—such were the reforms which the Major advocated far ahead of his time. As early as 1776 he published a treatise on Parliamentary Reform, to which he devoted his main energies throughout a long life, and he lived to see that the eventual triumph of his cause was certain. It was said of Cartwright by Horne Tooke that if there had been half a dozen men of his strong, decided character in as many English counties the American

War might have been avoided. He was a man of the highest character, and preached his Radical doctrines with a good temper and dignity sadly lacking among the Radical controversialists of his day.

East Markham Church is one of the noblest in the district. It has a massive pinnacled tower, with a stately arch opening into the nave. The building is of the best Perpendicular period, and flooded with light from the great west window and the windows of aisles, clerestory and chancel. In the chancel the principal feature is the square alabaster tomb of Judge Markham, who died in 1409. There is no effigy, and the only ornamentation other than the inscription round the edge consists of a series of blank shields set in circles. Some of the *graffiti* on the tomb show dates of 1647 and 1688. On the floor of the chancel are numerous memorials of the soldier family of Kirke, whose memorial window is close to that of the two Markham Judges. There is also a fine brass of Dame Merying (1419). The oak screen, much restored, at the end of the south aisle, originally belonged to the chancel. In the opposite side chapel is the original Pre-Reformation stone altar, placed in a wooden frame. This slab was found at a recent restoration in the floor at the entrance to the chancel, its presence having been revealed to the vicar in a dream before he came to East Markham. "Christian people"—so runs an unusually worded notice—"who sorrow for the greed and pride which defiled our Holy Places will no doubt be glad of an opportunity of making some slight reparation for the sins of our forefathers." That is, no doubt, one view of what took place at the Reformation, but it is scarcely an exhaustive judgment.

From the church a footpath leads across the fields towards Tuxford, and saves the wide detour made by the road. The lane in which it issues brings you out into the Great North Road, at the foot of the hill which leads steeply up into Tuxford, once known as Tuxford-in-the-Clay. This is a pleasant little town in an attractive position, seen at its best, perhaps, when approached from the by-roads on the west. The church spire, the clustering tiled roofs and the wind-mills, which still wave their big arms on a neighbouring eminence on the Retford Road, combine to form a pleasing picture. The town itself has grown from the cross roads, where is a broad open space dignified by the name of Market Place, though no market

is now held. The four plain recessed arches of a little building on one side of the square, are still called the Butter Market,



A Yard at Tuxford.

but it is long since any butter was sold there. Facing down the branch road is the big inn, the Newcastle Arms, a relic of the

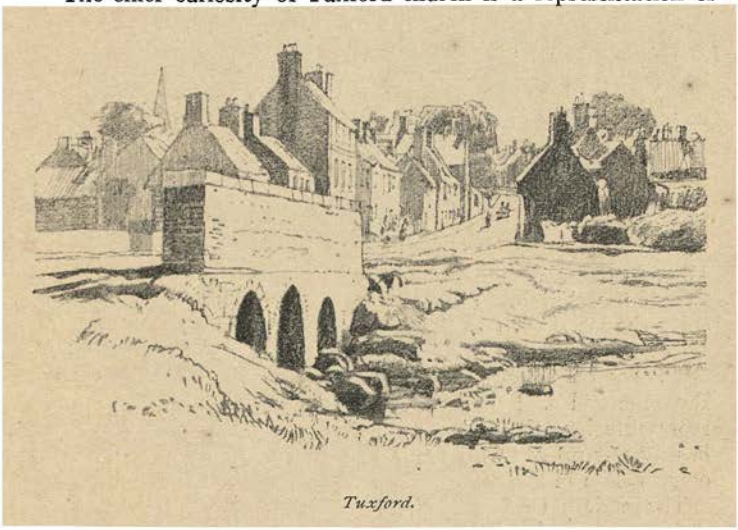
coaching days, with large courtyard and generous stabling at the back, all too spacious now for normal needs. Tuxford used to be a place of inns. There was once a Crown, where Margaret Tudor stayed on her way to Scotland to marry the King, but that was pulled down in 1587. There was also a White Hart, where Charles I. took refreshment on October 12, 1645, on his way from Newark to Welbeck. This was burnt in the fire of 1702, which consumed practically the whole town. Then the Newcastle Arms was built, and it was outside this inn that young John Scott, afterwards Lord Chancellor and Earl of Eldon, "cheeked" the Quaker. He was on his way to London to push his fortunes, and the motto on the coach in which he was travelling was "*Sat cito si sat bene*," which may be translated, "What is well enough is soon enough"— not a bad motto for a conveyance plying for profit. One of his fellow-travellers was a Quaker, who when the coach drew up at the door of the inn, called for the chambermaid and gravely handed her sixpence, explaining that he had forgotten to give it to her when he was that way two years before. Thereupon young Scott asked the Quaker if he had noticed the motto on the coach, and impertinently added, "Giving her sixpence is neither '*Sat cito*' nor '*sat bene*.'" The Quaker's reply is not recorded, but he may well have bidden the future Lord Chancellor mind his own business.

No doubt, a laborious search would reveal other references to the inn at Tuxford, for it was a well-known posting house. Mr. Gladstone, for example, in his early Parliamentary days used to drive over to Tuxford from Clumber to catch the High-flyer, which passed through on the way to London about midnight. On one occasion, in 1835, he found it gone, and while posting to Newark, had a smash on the road in the darkness, which might easily have ended his career.

Tuxford Church invites and repays a leisurely investigation. It is built of soft stone, known as Skerry or Tuxford stone, which has weathered badly, and extensive restorations, especially to the tower, are likely soon to be required. Inside, the restoration has been admirably carried out. One of the chief features is the beautiful lightness of the chancel, which has gained greatly from the removal of the dark woodwork which used to be carried up to the top of the chancel arch. The six-panelled screen has some good tracery. There is also an

elaborate font cover, carved by a local man, one Francis Turner, in 1673, the legend being that his own infant daughter was the first to be baptised in the font itself, which bore the date 1662. The tower is early English in the lower part, while the upper portion and spire date from about the middle of the fourteenth century. The list of rectors goes back to 1227. In 1351 the presentation passed to Newstead Priory and after the Reformation to Trinity College, Cambridge.

The chief curiosity of Tuxford church is a representation of



Tuxford.

the martyrdom of St. Lawrence within a canopied niche at the east end of the south aisle. It is a very rude piece of work in freestone, of no artistic merit and much decayed. But the grid on which the martyr is roasting is recognisable enough, and the martyr himself looks singularly unconcerned. The three executioners and their instruments of torture have been much defaced by time. There used to be another curiosity in the church, described by Pococke as "a sitting statue, broken off in the middle, of a woman with a girdle hanging down, fine drapery, and in a Roman chair, probably set up here for a saint,

but seems to have been the statue of Cybele. It is of very good workmanship, though of free-stone." That has long since vanished. On the north side of the chancel is a large chapel containing tombs and memorials of the Whites, who for many generations were lords of the manor of Tuxford and lived at the adjoining hall. The alabaster tomb is that of Sir John White, who died in 1625, leaving an infant heir who, perhaps luckily for his estate, was under age during the Civil War. His son married the heiress of the Taylors of Wallingwells, on the Derbyshire border. Tradition says that he lost his way while hunting, reached Wallingwells, where he was hospitably entertained, and fell in love with the daughter of the house. During the eighteenth century the Whites were large land-owners in the district, and George III. bestowed a baronetcy upon the head of the house for his public spirit in arming and clothing a regiment of volunteers. But in 1820 the manor of Tuxford was sold to the Duke of Newcastle for £65,000, and East Markham for £25,000, and the Whites deserted Tuxford Hall for Wallingwells, which is still their home. The chapel, however, in Tuxford church continues to be used as their burial place. It is not tended as it should be, and its air of neglect contrasts unfavourably with the trim neatness of the rest of the church. Through the bars one can read with difficulty the inscription on the monument of a gallant soldier, who, after safely passing through most of the battles of the Peninsula War, was mortally wounded by the French in a sortie from Bayonne and died the next day. The marble bears a pathetic representation of the three rough crosses which his comrades hastily put up over his grave and those of two other brother officers slain in the same action.

The modern Tuxford Hall, a red brick house of no distinction, attained some local celebrity a few years ago owing to the eccentricities of its owner, a veterinary surgeon who collected all sorts of odd curiosities with more enthusiasm than knowledge, and more zeal than taste. He built a grotto in the grounds to represent his idea of Hell, peopled it with images of the Devil and his ministers, and whenever he quarrelled with anyone,—a not unfrequent occurrence—his custom was to write the offender's name on a piece of paper and place it in the grotto —a performance which gratified his animosity and, so far as was ascertainable, did no harm to his enemy.

Opposite Tuxford Hall is the grammar school, a red-brick

building comprising school and master's house, in the most attractive and satisfying style of the late Stuart period. A large ugly chimney of manifestly later date somewhat spoils the symmetry of the roof, but with the exception of that and the massive door which bears the date of 1757, the handsome two-storeyed building remains practically just as it was when Charles Read founded the school in 1669. The door is flanked by two graceful brick columns; and above may be read the following inscription on a tablet of stone. "*Ingredere ut proficias. Condita disciplinae, charitatique designata a Carolo Read.* What God hath built let no man destroy. *Faxit.*" This Charles Read was a native of the neighbouring village of Darlton, two or three miles to the north-east. He migrated to Hull, where he prospered exceedingly as a shipper, and in token of gratitude left moneys for the foundation of three grammar schools, one at Tuxford, a second at Drax, and a third at Corby. The school at Drax was apparently the most important of the three, for its master received £30 a year, while the stipend at the other two was only £20. The Tuxford school has passed through many vicissitudes. At times the number of scholars has dwindled to a mere handful and the school has seemed to linger on rather for the sake of the master than of the scholars. But that only means that if there had been no endowment the school would have died out, and the present fixed salary of £40 a year, and what else the master can make out of it, is quite inadequate. As with many other small endowed grammar schools the struggle to keep going has been very severe of recent years, and their usual fate has been to fall into the hands of the County Councils and become transformed into secondary schools. That has already happened to the Corby foundation, and sooner or later Tuxford will probably share a similar fate.

Charles Read, the pious founder, left very precise regulations in respect of the schoolmaster. He was to be a graduate and Master of Arts, or at least "an orthodox minister of God's word and lawfully ordained, of good life and conversation." "I do ordain," so runs the trust deed, "that if the master should be a drunkard, quarreller, or profanely curse and swear, or use any unlawful games as cards, dice, tables, coites, laggets or such like at home or abroad, or frequent any suspected house or admit any infamous or suspected persons into his house to lodge or otherwise, he shall for the first offence be sharply

reproved, for the second forfeit five shillings and be expelled until he reconciles himself by acknowledging his offence to the trustees and superiors of the said school and become penitent for it, and for the third offence to be *ipso facto* deprived of his place." Another curious rule of these schools was that every boy in turn had to sweep out the school house on Saturday afternoons on pain of a fine of sixpence.

The Trent at Laneham.

CHAPTER XXIII

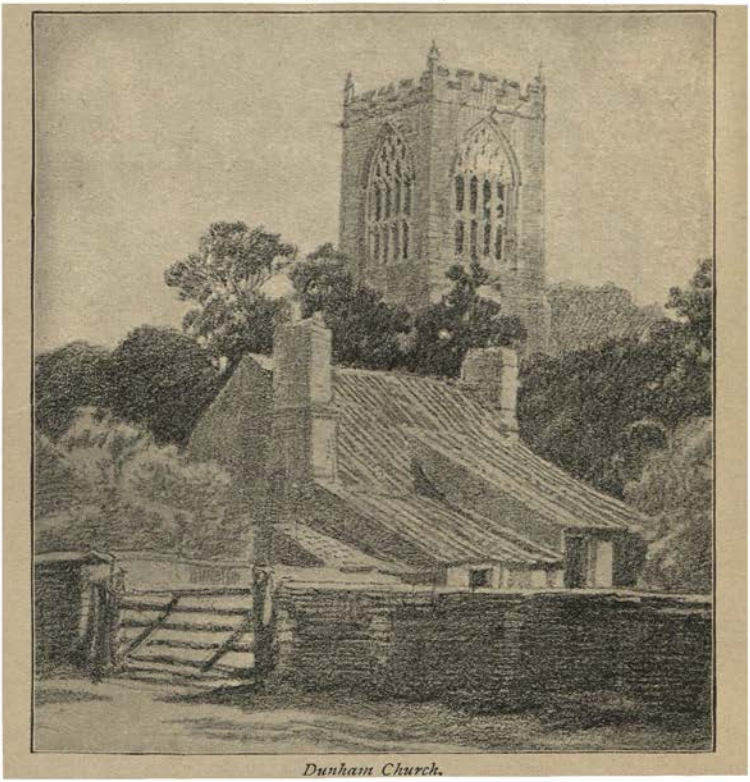
DUNHAM ; LANEHAM ; RAMPTON ; LITTLEBOROUGH ; STURTON ; WHEATLEY ; CLAYWORTH ; GRINGLEY ; WISETON ; MATTERSEY ; SUTTON-ON-TRENT

A Corbel at Rampton.

TUXFORD makes a good starting point for the pedestrian who would explore the north-eastern corner of the county. This is little visited by strangers, and is somewhat difficult and awkward of access by rail. Moreover, it contains no show places, and the Trent down to Gainsborough is even less of a pleasure river than in its higher reaches. However, some of its villages repay searching out, and their associations are well worth placing on record, while the low range of hills dividing the valleys of the Idle and the Trent affords here and there some remarkable view points.

From Tuxford, then, let us strike across to the Trent at Dunham. This is a village of considerable size possessing such tolerable inns as befit a place where a high road of importance reaches either ferry or bridge. The greatest day in its history, no doubt, was when "Dutch William" passed this way from

Lincoln on a visit to Welbeck, and was met on the Notts side of the ferry by the Duke of Portland and his retinue, who escorted him with much pomp for the remainder of the journey. Now the ferry has been superseded by a singularly plain and

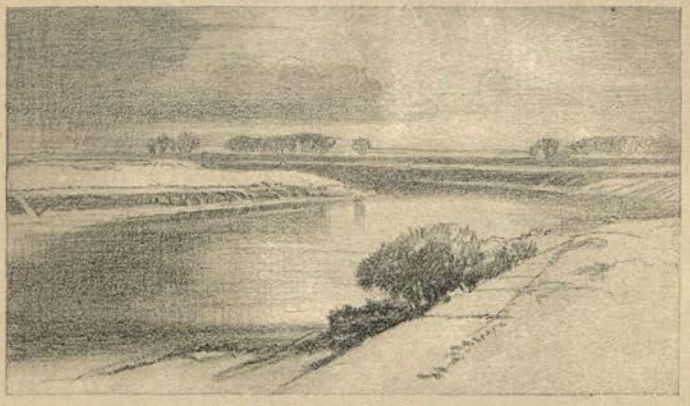


Dunham Church.

unpleasing bridge, while the narrow structure at its side which carries a great iron water pipe over the Trent is a still more grievous eyesore in an otherwise charming landscape. As for the church at Dunham, whose noble Perpendicular tower, with four handsome windows, is visible from afar and excites such pleasurable curiosity, that also proves most disappointing. The

neglectful eighteenth century allowed this once splendid church to fall into such grievous disrepair that in 1805 all save the tower had to be taken down. Then a new aisle-less and chancel-less fabric was put up, which gave place in 1862 to the present building.

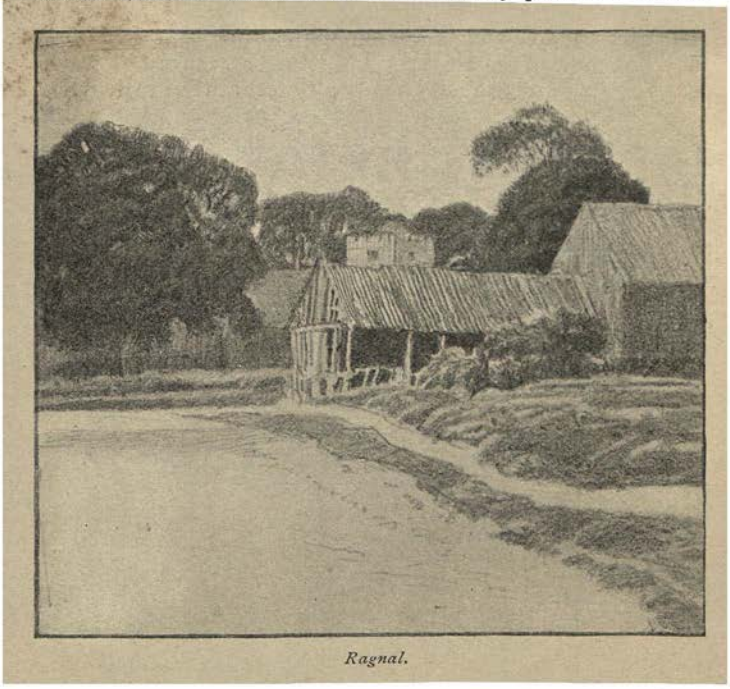
From Dunham, if the day is fair, it is a charming walk by the Trent side to Laneham, along the raised bank which has been built to keep the river within bounds. Here we get a spacious view over the low-lying fields on the Nottinghamshire side of the Trent valley; on the Lincolnshire side a range of low hills comes close down to the river, only fifty feet at their highest, but



The Trent at Laneham.

sufficiently imposing to lend an agreeable diversity to the landscape. Trent himself rolls down towards the sea broad and deep enough for dignity and swift enough to impose respect. A mile and a half along this pleasant bank brings us to the church tower among the trees which gives Church Laneham its name, and a pleasanter picture than that made by the grey church and the red roofs of the adjoining farm, and the broad shining reach of the Trent no one could desire. The church is old and full of interest. It has a wooden porch and an ancient oak door, a 12th century south doorway and chancel arch, and singularly graceful piers in the bays of the nave. A huge oak chest stands at the west end; the Jacobean pulpit bears the legend *Soli Deo honor et gloria;* and in the chancel is a singularly

interesting monument containing the kneeling figures of Ellis Markham and Jervase his son, who lived in the manor house on the river bank a little further down the stream. Jervase died in 1636; his father, Ellis, was Captain of Horse for the county and, as his epitaph states, "He longe served Her Majestie (Queen Elizabeth) in her warres with extraordinary proofe in Ireland



Ragnal.

and the Low Countries." This was the Markham whose virtues were commemorated by Queen Elizabeth in the couplet,

> Gervase the Gentle, Stanhope the stout,
> Markham the Lion, and Sutton the lout.

The site of the manor house is now occupied by a farm.

Laneham itself is a mile due west of Church Laneham. Here once stood a country house of the Archbishop of York, but no trace remains. We turn at the cross roads due north for a mile

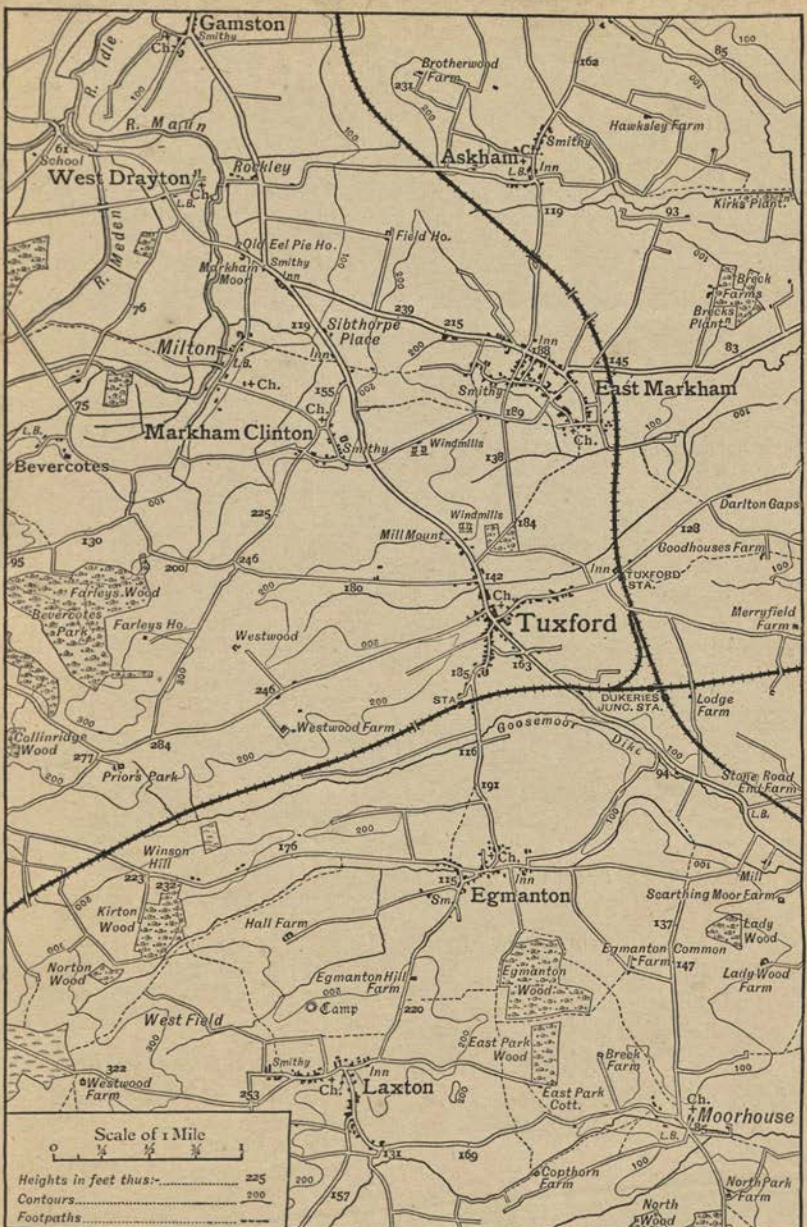
and a half to Rampton. This is a rather more important village and its manor house still preserves its ancient dignity in a pleasant park. Several families of great note in local history have been associated with Rampton—from the Maulovells and Longevillers down to the ubiquitous Stanhopes and the Eyres.

Gateway at Rampton.

The heiress of the Stanhopes, who bore the curious Christian name of Saunchia, married a Babington at the tender age of 7½ years in 1513, and from the Babingtons the estate passed to the Eyres, whose connection with Rampton lasted down to 1893. John Babington in Tudor days built a wall, of which the only surviving fragment is a fine gateway enriched with armorial devices, for the hall itself was pulled down in 1726, when the

Eyres, the owners of that day, migrated to the larger estate of Grove. A branch of the family, however, returned in 1853 and built the present mansion. The Eyres were a race of soldiers, and on the chancel walls of the church are many of their monuments, the most interesting being a small brass to the memory of Sir Gervase Eyre, who was slain in defending Newark Castle for King Charles I. Some of these monuments were brought to Rampton from Headon church, when Grove passed out of the Eyres' possession.

A good view of Rampton Hall is obtainable from the field footpath which takes you to Cottam, a tiny place of no consequence, save that it possesses the nearest railway station to Littleborough, a short two miles distant by road and field-path. This Littleborough is historically one of the most interesting hamlets in the county. It well justifies its name, for "little borough," indeed, it is, consisting only of a tiny church, three or four farms and a few cottages. It has no inn or place of refreshment. Yet it was busy enough when Littleborough was one of the most important crossings of the Trent. The Roman Road—the Ermine Street—from Lincoln to Doncaster here crossed the river, and the Romans here founded their station of Segelocum. Many Roman remains have been turned up from time to time. An altar found here is preserved at Osberton Hall; and Newark Museum contains several fragments of Littleborough pottery. The usual coins have been found ranging over the period from Trajan to Constantine, and the rough square stones which marked the floor of the ancient ford may still be seen in the river bed. The pavement, which has suffered a good deal by the deepening of the channel for navigation, crossed the river aslant, not quite corresponding to the line of the later ferry. This was a ferry for wagons, as well as passengers, which was abandoned a few years ago in consquence of a lawsuit between the lord of the manor and the Trent Navigation Company. One of the latter's boats had run into and sunk the ferry, but as the Courts acquitted the Company of liability, the lord of the manor did not replace the boat. Consequently, this ancient highway is to all intents and purposes closed, to the great inconvenience of the local community, for the nearest bridges are at Dunham and Gainsborough, and Till Bridge Lane, as the road is called on the Lincolnshire side of the river, is rapidly lapsing into a green track. By this route Harold and his army crossed the Trent on their way south



Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M.Stationery Office.

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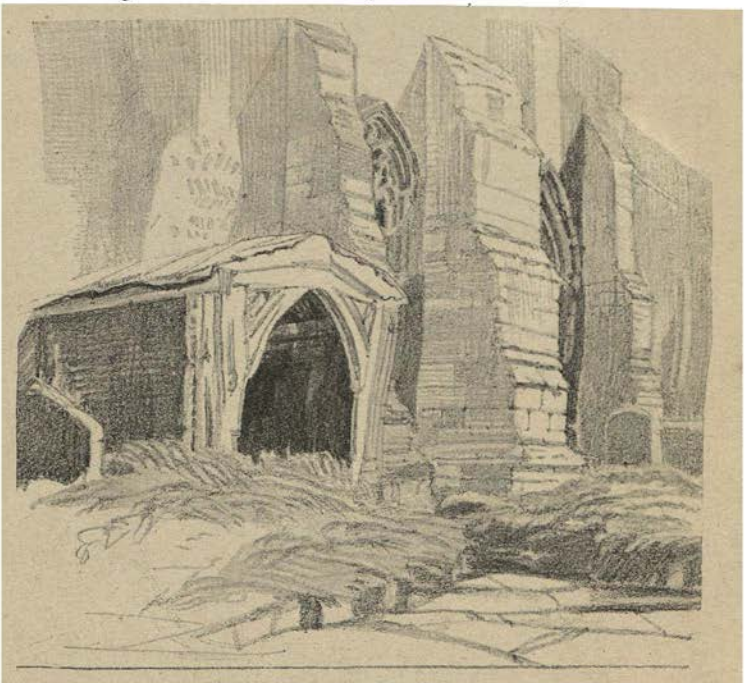
to Hastings. It is worth noting that though the road traffic has all been diverted the great trunk telegraph cables between North and South pass under the Trent at this point.

At Littleborough, if you have good fortune, you may see the " Aegir." This is the bore, or wall of water, which rushes

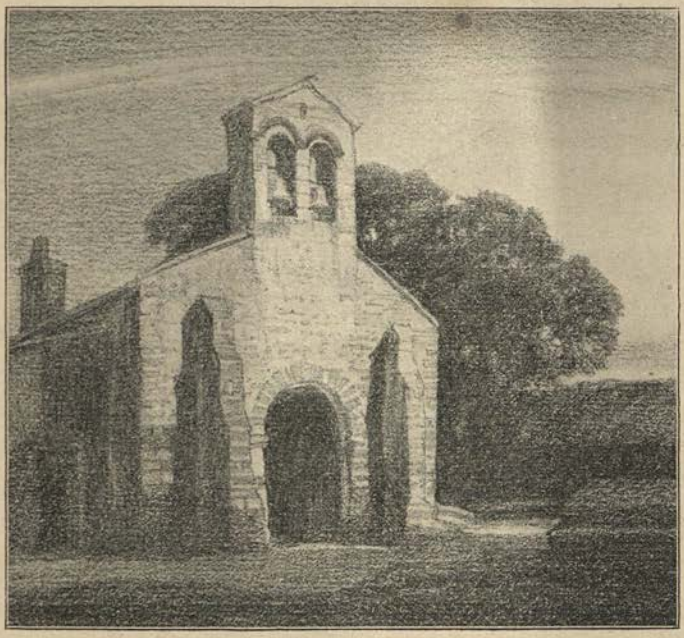


Laneham Church.

up the Trent during the spring tides, followed by a series of waves, known as " whelps." It is caused by the tides moving up the Humber to the mouth of the Trent, where they are met by the big volume of river water coming down. A wall rises and flows rapidly up the river, sweeping round the bends with great speed and with a curious rippling sound. Sometimes the wall of water is six feet high, and it brings disaster to any boats which it catches unprepared. George Eliot speaks of the Aegir

and the floods of the Trent in "The Mill on the Floss." For the Floss is the Trent and the town of St. Ogg's, where the scene of the story is pitched, is Gainsborough, a few miles down the river towards the sea.

Littleborough makes a charming picture, for it is just a cluster of red farms, red cottages and tiny stone church, all set down



Littleborough Church.

together in the green fields at a big bend of the Trent. The bank on the Nottinghamshire side requires the protection of a stout retaining wall; on the Lincolnshire side there is the usual low range of hills pleasantly wooded, and a broad white road stretching away in the distance. The church—one of the smallest in the county—should not be overlooked, for though its exterior is bare and unpretentious and chiefly interesting for its herring-bone masonry, it has within a noble recessed Norman chancel arch

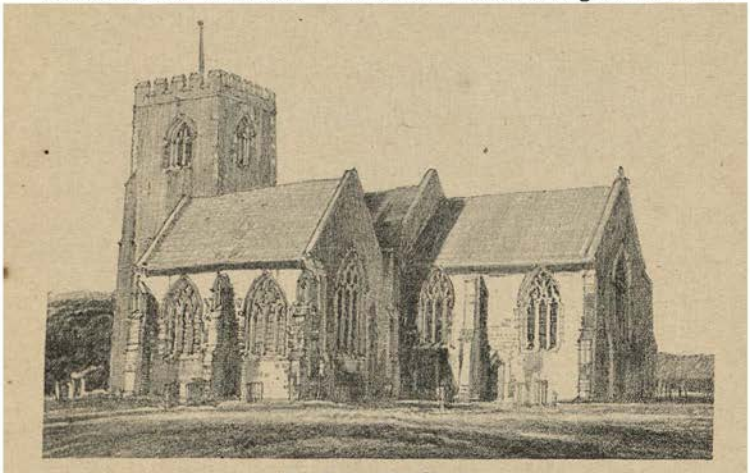
which has hardly suffered at all in its eight centuries of existence. The low side window in the chancel has been blocked up, but the piscina retains its basin intact. Littleborough before the Dissolution belonged to Welbeck Abbey and a century ago was held in conjunction with Sturton-le-Steeple, but in 1876 it was taken from Sturton and united to Cottam. The church was restored in 1908 and its walls stripped of many coats of plaster.

Sturton-le-Steeple.

In 1860 a Roman stone coffin—now in Lincoln Museum—was discovered in the churchyard and those who opened it gazed upon the features of a woman who had lain there for fifteen hundred years. But in a few minutes the body crumbled away into fine dust on exposure to the air.

The road from Littleborough to Sturton is uncompromisingly flat, and Sturton itself is of little interest save for its name—which is simply Streeton or the town on the Roman street—and

for the massive and pinnacled tower of its church. This tower had the good fortune to escape unscathed in the fire of 1901 which destroyed the rest of the building and ruined most of the monuments. The blackened remains of some of these are to be seen in the base of the tower, including the stumpy figure—hideously scorched and damaged—of Dame Frances Earle, mother of one of the Thornhaughs of Fenton. A much more ancient effigy of a lady, said to belong to the same family, is hidden away in a corner of the west end. But the most interesting memorial is



North Leverton Church.

the marble slab on the north side of the chancel floor near the altar. This bears in coloured marble the arms of Sir Francis Thornhaugh, one of the most prominent of the Nottinghamshire gentry on the Parliament side during the Civil War, who was slain at the battle of Preston in 1648. He was an intimate friend of Colonel Hutchinson and his wife, and the latter gives a vivid description of the gallantry with which he met his death :—

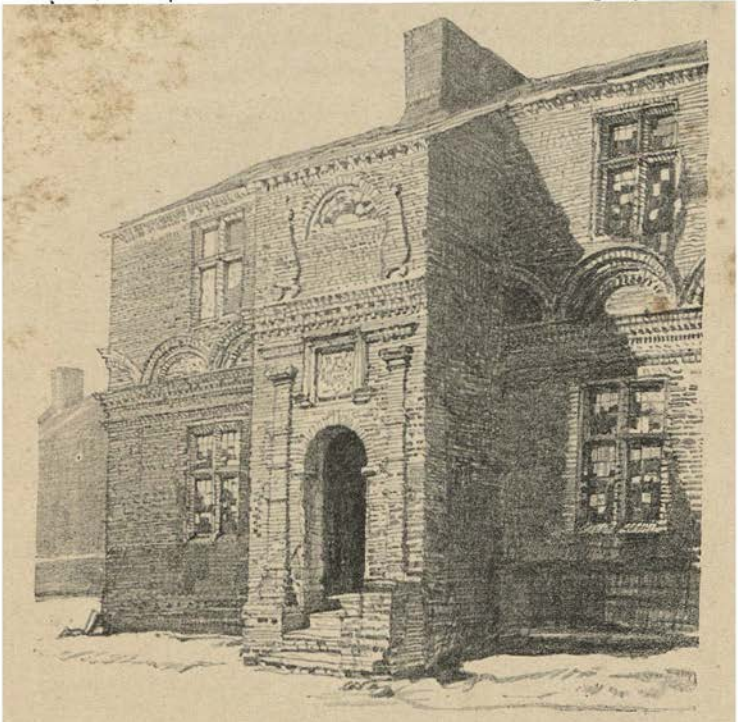
" Being at the beginning of the charge on a horse as courageous as became such a master, he made such furious speed to set upon a company of Scotch lancers, that he was singly engaged and mortally wounded, before it was possible for his regiment, though as brave men as ever drew sword, and too affectionate to their

colonel to be slack in following him, to come up time enough to break the fury of that body, which shamed not to unite all their force against one man: who yet fell not among them, but being faint and all covered with blood, of his enemies as well as his own, was carried off by some of his own men, while the rest, enraged for the loss of their dear colonel, fought not that day like men of human race; but deaf to the cries of every coward that asked mercy, they killed all, and would not that a captive should live to see their colonel die; but said the whole kingdom of Scotland was too mean a sacrifice for that brave man. His soul was hovering to take her flight out of his body, but that an eager desire to know the success of that battle kept it within till the end of the day, when the news being brought him, he cleared his dying countenance, and said, 'I now rejoice to die, since God hath let me see the overthrow of this perfidious enemy; I could not lose my life in a better cause, and I have the favour from God to see my blood avenged.'"

The home of the Thornhaughs was at Fenton, a hamlet less than a mile to the south-east of Sturton, but their manor house has vanished with its owners. The male line of the Thornhaughs died out and an heiress carried the estate into the family of the Foljambes, of Osberton. In still earlier days Fenton had belonged to the Fentons, two of whom were men of rank under Queen Elizabeth, for one Geoffrey was Principal Secretary for Ireland, while his brother Robert was an intrepid sailor explorer of the school of Raleigh. He sailed with Frobisher on his third voyage to America, and when the Grand Armada came he served as pilot on board the Lord High Admiral's flagship. At one time in his career Fenton is said to have entertained seriously the project of proclaiming himself King of St. Helena!

At Sturton we leave the flat lowlands behind us and soon enter into the region of the Wheatley Hills, a range of high ground some three or four miles wide, between the plains of the Trent and the Idle. There are two Wheatleys, North and South, and two churches, with towers very much alike, are seen from a distance. But South Wheatley Church is a ruin, of which little remains save the tower and the narrow Norman chancel arch. Why a second church should ever have been required is not clear, yet it is only a few years ago that South Wheatley was dismantled. A pleasant footpath through the fields affords a charming view of North Wheatley, set on rising ground amid

tall trees, with a windmill and red roofs to complete the picture. In the village stands a curious brick house, bearing the date 1673, and the arms of the Cartwrights in stone above the brick porch. The brick columns and vase-like decorations, all of brick, are worth notice and the house has a certain dignity which



House at North Wheatley.

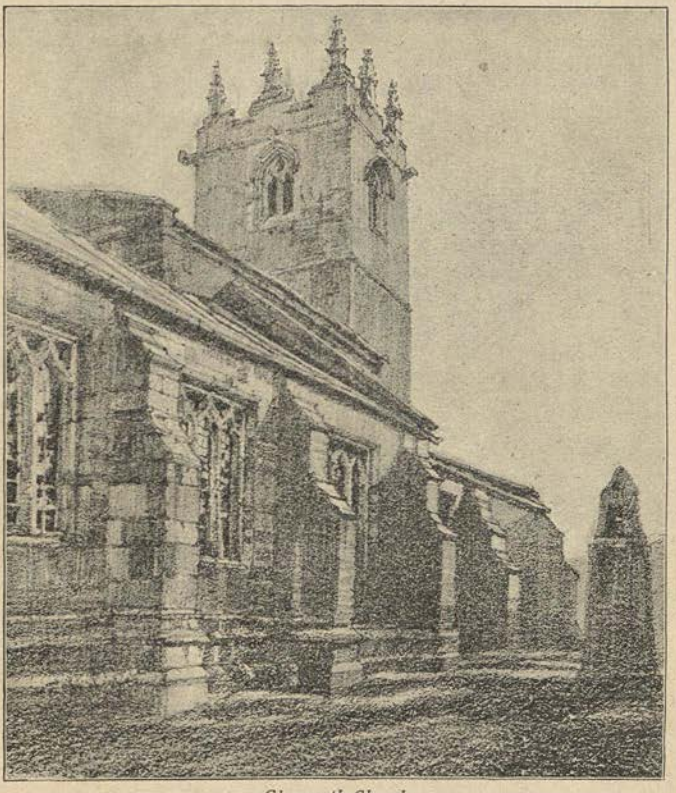
becomes it well. The church is an odd medley. Several of its features were brought from South Wheatley and from another dismantled church at West Burton down by the Trent side, three miles away. Its most unique possession, however, is all its own, and that is an incredibly rude oak staircase inside the tower leading to the platform of the bell ringers. The steps consist of

roughly trimmed logs cut through diagonally and the structure seems to have been the handiwork of the village carpenter plying his most primitive tools. There are some good bench ends, a Jacobean pulpit, and a curious palimpsest brass. This was originally used for Johanna, wife of Hugh Cokesaye, daughter of Lord de Fornyvale, but a few years later, in 1445, the reverse side was used for a London vintner, named Edward Sheffield. The device of the London Vintners Company is displayed in a shield.

During the 'Forty-Five an army of 6,000 men, partly English and partly Hessians, was encamped on the Wheatley Hills, to be ready in case Prince Charlie and his Highlanders chose the east coast route from Edinburgh to London. But as the invaders entered England at Carlisle and not at Berwick, the Wheatley Hills saw no fighting, and the army was soon moved across towards Derby.

From Wheatley the old Roman road pursues a fairly straight course to Clayworth up the sharp incline of Awkward Hill, passing in the fields on the left the farmhouse known as Hayton Castle. This was the residence of the family of Hartshorne, whose memorial tablets are to be seen in Clayworth Church with their virtues celebrated in rude rhymes. From the top of the hill the road dives down to the level at the side of the Chesterfield Canal and soon enters Clayworth, a cheerful village with a small hall, a manor house and a church of considerable interest. In the chancel is the elaborate table tomb of Humphrey Fitzwilliam, who died in 1556, well sculptured at the sides, though the brass is unfortunately missing from the top. There are some good Kempe windows, and the chancel walls were painted, but with very indifferent success, as a mother's thanksgiving for the safe return of her son from the South African War. The memorials of the Ackloms, owners of neighbouring Wiseton during the eighteenth century, are of no merit, but one of them records that Mary Acklom, who died in 1801, lost the use of her right hand by a paralytic stroke in 1796 and yet learnt to become with the left "a cheerful and serious correspondent." In the tower is a tablet to a former Rector, the Rev. William Sampson, who deserves remembrance because he compiled a record of his parish during the quarter of a century that he was Rector. Beginning in 1676 it was carried down to 1701, the year before the Rector's death, and it contains a most interesting miscellany of

Clayworth news and statistics. We learn, for example, that in 1676 the residents numbered 400, of whom 236 were of an age to communicate, and that two hundred of these communicated at Easter. There were no "popish recusants," and the Rector



Clayworth Church.

added, "Nor are there, thanks be to God, any other Dissenters, which either obstinately refuse or wholly absent themselves from communion as by law required." The "Rector's Book of Clayworth," as it is called, has recently been published. The original consists of 62 closely written parchment leaves and was

intended by its compiler "to be delivered to whomsoever shall be Parson of Clayworth after me."

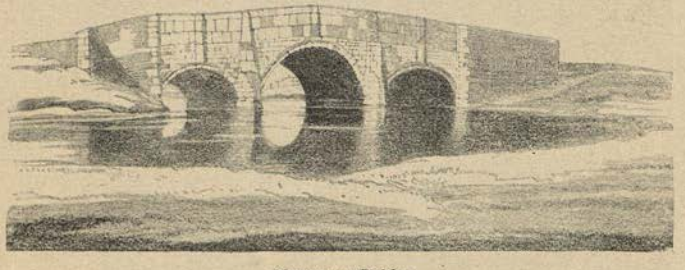
From Clayworth it is two miles due north to Gringley-on-the-Hill, which chiefly deserves a visit for the sake of the glorious view from Beacon Hill. This is a little hillock at the eastern extremity of the village—Gringley, it may be added, is built along a narrow ridge—and was in ancient days an encampment. It was an ideal site for the purpose, for no hostile force could hope in daylight to steal unobserved upon Beacon Hill. All round the

Wiseton Hall, 1792.
From an engraving by Pouncy, from a drawing by Miss Acklom.

country lies exposed and spreads away for endless miles, especially to the north and south-west. The eye travels far over the broad flats or carrs—as they are called—to the extreme north-east of the county on the one side, and across the valley of the Idle on the other towards Barnby Moor. The carrs were once a dreary swamp. Not only did the Trent and Idle periodically overflow their banks in winter, but much of the countryside was regularly flooded every spring tide, as it lay only a few feet above sea level. Efforts at reclamation were made even in the days of the Roman occupation, and the Bycar Dyke on the

northern boundary of the county is believed to be a Roman work. It is now supplemented by the great Morther Drain, which runs parallel to the Idle but at a lower level. The church at Gringley which, a few years ago, had fallen into a state of deplorable neglect, has been recently restored, enlarged and beautified. The south aisle is wholly new. The fine bases of the pillars in the north aisle are worth noting, and outside the church the octagonal shaft and niche of the old village cross. Gringley Hall, close by, is now put to the beneficent use of a hospital for crippled children.

From Gringley a pleasant road leads towards Bawtry, joining the Roman road two miles away at Drakeholes. Here is to be found the rare blessing of a comfortable country inn, and the

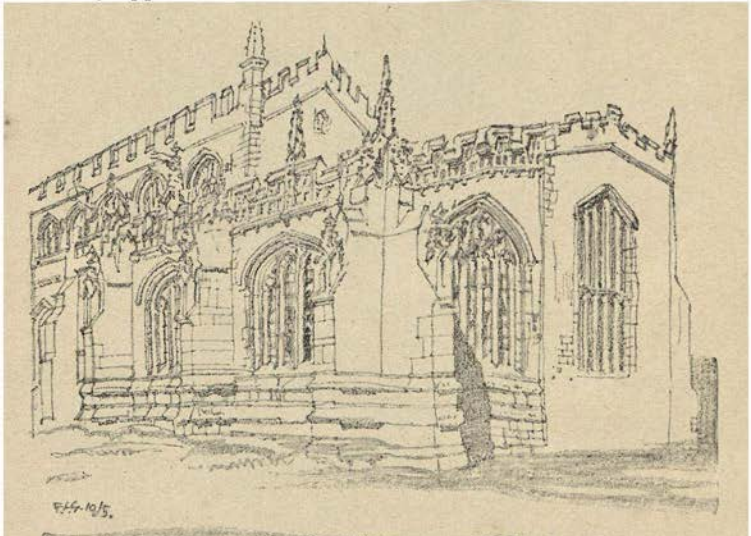


Mattersey Bridge.

Chesterfield Canal makes a dramatic dive through the hillside by means of a tunnel 270 yards long. It has no towing path, and the boatmen, lying flat on their backs, propel their barges by foot-work along the tunnel roof. Here, too, is one of the entrance gates of Wiseton Hall, the big house of the neighbourhood, which lies between Drakeholes and Clayworth. This has long been an estate of some importance. Once the home of the Nelthorpes it passed, in Charles II.'s time, to the Ackloms, a Yorkshire family, one of whose members was killed at the siege of Scarborough Castle in 1645. The Ackloms dwelt at Wiseton throughout the eighteenth century, until the estate was carried by an heiress into the noble family of the Spencers by the marriage in 1814 of Esther Acklom to Lord Althorp, afterwards third Earl Spencer. During their brief union—Lady Althorp died four years later and left no issue—Wiseton was a political house, for Lord Althorp

was one of the leaders of the Whig oligarchy and Brougham was a frequent visitor. Afterwards the estate was sold and eventually passed into the possession of the grandfather of the present owner, General Laycock, well known in Nottinghamshire for his public spirit and love of sport in time of peace and for his soldierly qualities in time of war.

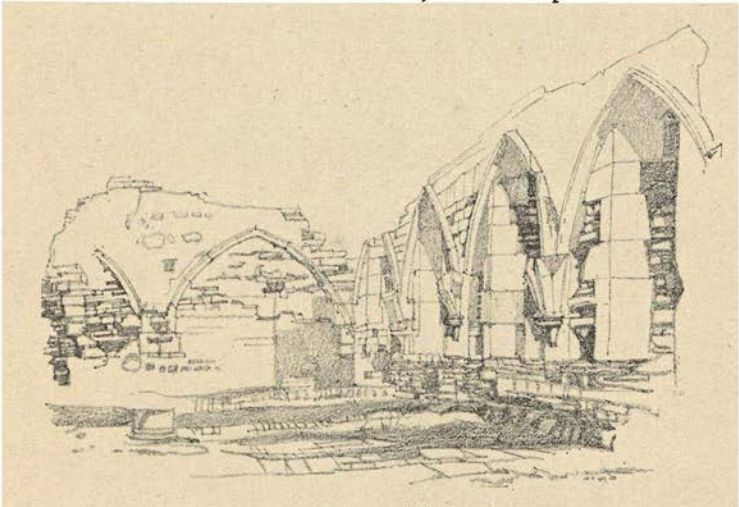
At Drakeholes we take a pleasant by-road to Mattersey. This closely approaches several "esses" of the Idle, as it cleaves a



Sutton-on-Trent Church.

tortuous channel through the low-lying meadows. The river comes right up to the foot of shapely Pusto Hill and on the further bank may be seen the ruins of Mattersey Priory, only to be reached by a long detour. As we draw near to Mattersey, a mile farther on, the buildings of the little town fall into a most harmonious group, crowned by the church tower. The Idle is here crossed by a beautiful grey stone bridge, built long ago by the monks of the Priory. The church has a few fragments of old glass, and two well preserved slabs of sculpture, now built into the vestry wall, one of which shews St. Martin dividing his cloak

with a beggar, while the other is supposed, more doubtfully, to represent the discovery of the Cross, by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. On some of the pillars in the chancel the letter A has been conspicuously cut. Few probably would guess its meaning, for it represents the first letter of the name of the tithe-owner, Jonathan Acklom, of Wiseton, who thus indicated the extent of this personal responsibility for repairs to the fabric. As owner of the tithe, he was responsible for the



Mattersey Abbey.

upkeep of the chancel, but he evidently did not mean to spend a single penny on the nave.

The ruins of Mattersey Priory are a long half mile distant from the church, and well repay a visit, now that the ground plan has been laid bare by excavation carried out during the year 1914. Previously only a small portion of the cloisters and a largish fragment of the refectory or undercroft, near the picturesque farmhouses adjoining, were above ground. Now the entire ground plan has been uncovered and the bases of the pillars exposed. The site is one of deep tranquillity and quiet beauty, for the Priory stood in an angle of the river, across which it looked towards the charming outline of the low wooded hills. It

was a small religious house of the Gilbertines, which was founded in 1185, and dedicated to St. Helen. It was suppressed in 1538. The last Prior became Master of the Grammar School at Malton, in Yorkshire, in 1546.

A dullish stretch of three miles of high road divides Mattersey from Sutton, where the church has some fine windows with flowing tracery, a stone-roofed south porch, and a massive oak door which opens on hinges in its middle. There are also a number of carved oak bench ends, and an unusual and apparently meaningless niche outside the east window of the chancel provokes, without satisfying, curiosity. At Sutton we are only a mile distant from the Bell at Barnby Moor and Retford is close by along the Great North Road.

CHAPTER XXIV

EGMANTON ; LAXTON ; OSSINGTON ; CAUNTON ; NORWELL ; HOLME ; KELHAM ; AVERHAM

Two miles due south of Tuxford is the little village of Egmanton, which once had a Norman Castle and, in more modern days, a substantial Hall on the road to Kirton. Both alike have vanished and left hardly a trace. But the beautiful church remains and in recent years it has been most lavishly restored by the present Duke of Newcastle. It contains specimens of eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth century work and the chantry chapel, built by the Saville family in the 13th century, is not only in an excellent state of preservation, but is once more used according to the intention of the founder. At the recent restoration a magnificent open rood screen, decorated in the mediæval manner, was placed in the church, and over the rood itself is a canopy springing from the eastern side of the loft. The organ is placed over the south door and the wooden frame which supports it is decorated with the same elaborate ornament as the screen.

Beyond Egmanton, a long mile to the south-west, is Laxton, a village of singular interest. It has a noble church—it once was nobler—considerable charm of situation, traditions of vanished splendour clustering round the tumbled mounds of its ancient castle, and a system of field culture which is a curious survival of the days gone by. Laxton stands on rising ground. Hence, of course, its selection for the site of a castle. The main street occupies a ridge whence the ground falls away steeply to the south, and a pretty picture the houses and the church tower make as you see them from the south side across the hollow. To the north is a plateau with deep depressions below the old castle, forming a natural protection. This castle—simply marked " camp " on the ordnance survey—gave Laxton or Lexington, as it was usually written, its early

importance. It is approached by a green lane opposite the church which soon runs out into a large open field, full of mounds. No wall is to be seen and no ruin of any sort, but never did bare field tell its story more clearly. The larger space, which you enter first, must have been the castle yard; you cross it to a smaller enclosure which formed the inner court, and on the further side is a shapely mound with some pleasant trees upon it, where stood the innermost stronghold of all. The site has been well quarried in the intervening centuries for the worked stone, and a causeway was built through the dry ditch to facilitate the removal of the stone from the inner court. But "the Old Hall grounds," as they are called locally, are now a quiet grazing place, and the grass is green over all the precincts of a once lordly house. The castle dated from early Norman days. First the Birkins were lords of Laxton, and then in 1227 began the rule of the Everinghams, to whom it passed by marriage. The Everinghams endured down to 1399. Hereditary custodians of the forest of Sherwood they were, until, in 1287, Robert de Everingham was deprived of his privileges and the hereditary character of the post was abolished. He lies in effigy in the church near by, the oldest of all the monuments. To him succeeded his son Adam, who served in the Scotch wars against William Wallace and was created a Baron by Edward II., though later on he took up arms against his sovereign and, when captured at Boroughbridge in 1322, was held to ransom for 400 marks. Two more Everinghams followed and then the race died out, and the castle passed in turn to the families of Longvillers and Roos, while its importance gradually waned till the age of castles passed away and the building fell into utter ruin. Several kings visited Laxton in the days of its glory. John was there in 1205 on one of his hunting expeditions, and two years later he fined Laxton £100 "to have the King's peace." Edward I. was also at Laxton when the news came that his beloved Queen Eleanor lay at the point of death at Harby, a few miles away on the other side of the Trent.

Nor was this castle of the Everinghams the only great house at Laxton. Another big place stood on the south side of the church. The sloping field below the vicarage bears the name of the "Hall Orchard," and the depressions at the foot of the slope mark the old fish-ponds. The Lexingtons, who were lords

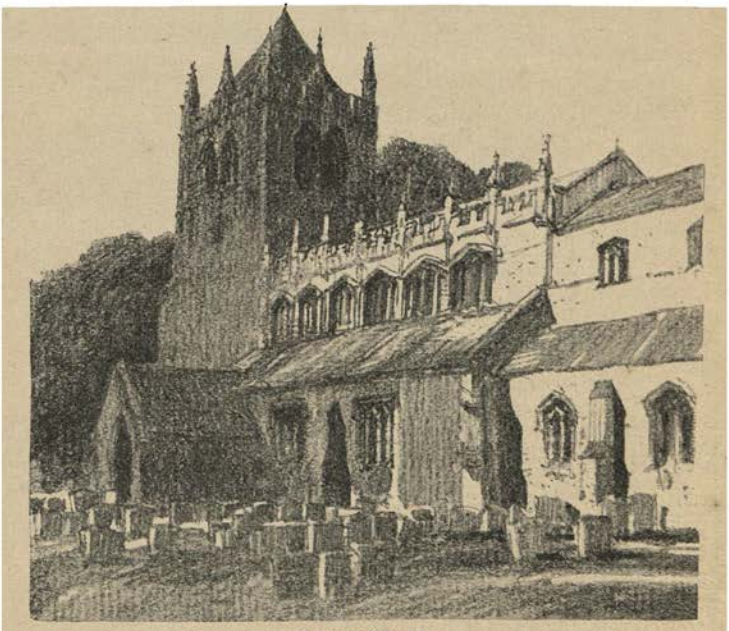
of this manor, were a family of considerable note in one generation, for of three brothers one was Bishop of Lincoln, another was Lord Keeper, and the third was made a Baron of the realm. They moved their principal seat to Tuxford. Perhaps they felt that Laxton was hardly big enough for two great magnates to dwell side by side. In the church each family had its separate chapel, the Lexingtons on the north side and the Everinghams on the south, but by the irony of fate and the blundering of ignorant hands three of the Everingham effigies were at some time or other carried across the chancel and placed upon the flat top of a Lexington tomb, which was "cut down" for the purpose. The angels on this beautiful tomb are said to bear a resemblance to those in the famous Angel Choir at Lincoln, which was begun when Henry of Lexington was Bishop. The marble effigies wrongfully placed above it are those of the great Adam de Everingham and his first wife; the rare oak effigy, wonderfully carved and preserved, is that of his second wife. The fine alabaster monument, which is in its rightful place in the Everingham chapel, is that of Reginald, the last of his race.

Laxton church, which is well worth visiting on account of these interesting tombs, was ruthlessly restored in 1860. It was all done with the best intentions, for the second Earl Manvers, who bore the cost, was a most devout and generous churchman. But barbarous deeds were done. The tower was entirely rebuilt, and as the church was considered too big for the village, two bays of the nave were lopped off and the fabric shortened to that extent. Moreover, the chantry chapel of the Everinghams was also pulled down. It was not wanted, they said, and the church would be more compact without it. And then, by way of decoration, strings of texts were painted in bright colours on the walls. Such was the taste of 1860! Yet even so the church remains a noble building, full of light as a church should be, with a fine clerestory which Archbishop Rotherham, whose curious effigy may be seen on the north battlements, put up about 1490, a rood screen dating from the same period, and a chancel with an Easter Sepulchre, canopied sedilia, a beautiful double piscina, and a low side window, eighteen inches high and three and a half inches wide, close up to the east end wall. The plain oak reredos is the memorial erected by his Laxton tenants to the third Earl Manvers, in 1900.

The church is now carefully tended with the devotion that so

ancient and beautiful a fabric deserves. But it was not always so. In the closing years of the eighteenth century the Rev. John Robinson allowed it to fall into a state which moved Throsby to an honest fiery indignation which does one good to read.

"The north cemetery, which was doubtless chosen as a resting place for the pious founders of and benefactors to this place, is



Laxton Church.

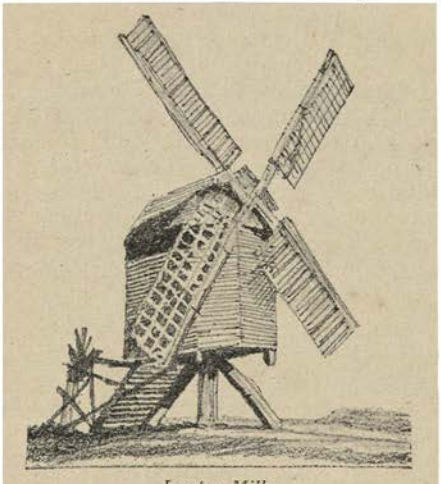
the foulest man ever saw. I will attempt a description of it without the smallest exaggeration. The floor and old stones are completely covered with coals, coal slack, cinders, fire-wood, straw, lime, broken bricks and stone, hassocks and floor mats torn in pieces, ladders, an old sieve, broken scuttles and spades, brushes without handles and handles without brushes, mortar boards and mortar, reeds, tiles, foot, broken glass, dog's dung and——

" While I viewed with indignation the insulting devastations around me, the deeds of the modern Goths and Vandals in France rushed like a rapid stream into my mind; in idea I saw the atrocious, if not similar, destruction of the arts in the churches of that once fine country. How has it happened that not one fostering hand has been found in Laxton or its neighbourhood to shelter these monuments of our forefathers from the most shameful abuse? Could not their uplifted hands and their prostrate bodies in the solemn acts of prayer for mercy command respect or pity?"

Laxton was no isolated case. At the end of the eighteenth century it was the exception rather than the rule in England to find a well-tended and well cared-for country church. The fabrics and monuments suffered more irreparably from the careless and often brutal neglect of that century than they did from the cumulative natural decay of the preceding two or three.

It will be seen that Laxton has plenty of attractions for the antiquary, but it is even more interesting still to the agriculturist and economist. For, as has been said, the open field system of culture has been in full operation here from time immemorial. The village itself may be said to be the only enclosure in the parish, with a few exceptions where woodland has been brought under cultivation in comparatively recent times. It forms a parallelogram, with a series of gates at the points of entry on all sides but one, where the barriers have been removed.' All round are the wide open fields, three in number, West Field, Mill Field, and South Field, and a big common stretching away to Wellow Wood. The principle of the system is simple enough. One big field is reserved for wheat; a second for spring corn (*i.e.*, barley, oats, beans, peas, etc.), and the third lies fallow. So the rotation goes on year after year. The fields are divided into narrow strips among the various tenants, the only boundary between them being a thin belt of grass, which of course is liable to constant disturbance during ploughing. As soon as the harvest is gathered in, the commoners have the right of pasturing on the two fields which have been under crops, and it rests with a Field Jury of twelve to say when the fields shall be declared open. But for this, animals might be turned in when some of the crops were standing and these would suffer ruin. A dilatory cultivator is thus kept up to the mark and is induced to get in his crops at the same time

as his neighbours. The land is mostly heavy clay, and in order to make the system as fair as possible, the holdings are split up a good deal, so that no one gets an unfair share of the best ground. But the drawbacks are serious, because of the amount of time wasted in getting from one patch to another, and the strips are sometimes so narrow that they cannot be cross-ploughed or cross-harrowed. As a system, it stands utterly condemned from the point of view of sound economics. The waste of time is enormous. Mistakes are constantly arising as to the identity of the strips. One man will sometimes seed his neighbour's plot in error for his own, and then there is trouble about compensation. If a careless tenant does not clean his land well, the seeds from his thistles and weeds are blown broadcast over his neighbour's ground. A good deal of trampling down of other men's crops is unavoidable, and the labour of dragging implements from one end of the parish to the other is a serious detail. The system, therefore, is bad, and though it is borne without much grumbling by those who have been used to it all their lives, no sane person would think of introducing it elsewhere.



Laxton Mill.

The windmill, which is a conspicuous feature in the Mill Field, grinds all the wheat that is ground in Laxton, and Laxton prides itself on growing as good wheat as any in the county. In the old days it used to command a special price. It is important to bear in mind that these fields are in no sense communal in character. Laxton is part of the Manvers estate; all those who have holdings in the open fields are tenants; and it is probable that the open fields would have been done away with long ago but for the enormous expense which enclosure would entail.

There are, indeed, certain common rights in Laxton Common, a wide expanse of coarse ground, but even for these rights the commoners pay a pound a year. This includes, however, the still more valuable privilege of putting sheep on the common fields when the harvest is gathered in. The commoners' rights belong to those who have holdings in the common fields and they attach also to certain cottages in the village, which go by the name of tofts. These are privileged cottages, and the erection of a new cottage in Laxton does not carry with it the commoner's right.

Such is a brief outline of the open field system, which also exists to a limited extent in the neighbouring parish of Eakring. Some town-bred doctrinaires appear to believe that it is a favourable system for the cultivator of to-day. But no warrant for any such assumption is to be obtained from the experience of Laxton. On the contrary, it would be much truer to say that the disadvantages of the open-field system are only counterbalanced at Laxton by the advantages derived from forming part of the large and well-managed estate of a wealthy and public-spirited proprietor. Old Tom Tusser hit the nail on the head when he sang in his quaint way, three centuries and a half ago :—

> The countrie enclosèd I praise,
> The tother delighteth not me,
> For nothing the wealth it doth raise
> To such as inferior be.

From Laxton we make our way due south by a track across Mill Field to Kneesall Woods and then, crossing another track which runs east and west from Kneesall to Ossington, keep straight forward out into the high road from Ollerton to Newark. The high-perched village of Kneesall is seen well to the right, and wooded Ossington to the left. The latter place has given its name to a peerage. Ossington Hall, for some time the home of a branch of the Cartwrights, of Marnham, was bought in 1780 by William Denison, a Leeds clothier, who is said to have made a large fortune by the lucky accident that a ship, laden with his wares, arrived off Lisbon just after the earthquake in 1755. One of his descendants in Victorian days had a remarkable family of fourteen children, nine boys and five girls. Of the boys one, John Evelyn Denison, was Speaker of the House of Commons from 1857 to 1872, and became Viscount Ossington. Another brother was Bishop of Salisbury; another Archdeacon of Taunton; another was Governor-General of Australia; another

was Deputy Judge-Advocate; another was a Colonel; and yet another was Chief-Commissioner of the Civil Service in Madras. That is a record which few families can beat.

Entering the high road at Caunton Common, we keep on for a long mile till we approach a well-wooded estate on the right hand. This is Beesthorpe Hall, long the home of the Bristowes, who were on the Parliamentary side during the Civil Wars. There are beautiful modern windows to members of the Bristowe family in Caunton church. The village of Caunton lies retired from the main road half a mile down a lane on the left, in a quiet backwater of its own. It is a cluster of red-brick cottages, dotted down casually here and there, with a church and a manor house and a stream winding its devious way to the Trent near Carlton. One thing only draws us to Caunton, the fact of its being the birthplace of Dean Hole—one of the best-known and best-loved dignitaries of the Church of England in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Everyone has heard of Dean Hole, who grew roses and wrote about them so delightfully, who loved sport of all kinds and was not afraid to say so, who spoke so humanly and sensibly at Church congresses and the like, and was just the best type of broad, sympathetic, tolerant and courageous Englishman. He was born at the manor house close by, which had been in the possession of his family for many generations, and he himself was vicar and squire of Caunton for many years, and lived there until he became Dean of Rochester. There is a beautiful west window to his memory in the church. It is in the tower and rather inconspicuous on that account, but the three lights in the chancel window were already filled, unfortunately, with very indifferent glass. The oak panelling of the chancel is also part of the Dean's memorial, and tablets on wall and floor record the names of several generations of Holes.

Mr. G. A. B. Dewar, who wrote a Memoir of Dean Hole, gives a very charming description of Caunton and its long association with the Dean's family, which we cannot do better than quote :—

"A visit to Caunton for the first time by anyone who cares for the things that Hole cared for is delightful. There is little—there is nothing perhaps of the more typical Midland scenery about the village or the land on which the manor house itself is set. Some of the best sporting country, at any rate fox-hunting country, of the Midlands is curiously flat, one acre very like another acre; fat pastures everywhere with hedge-

rows of elms, elms, elms. Nor are the rivers clear or lovely in their flow compared with the chalk streams of Hampshire or the moorland streams of Devon. It is the prose of English landscape; prose with rare man-making, Empire-making qualities. One who visits Caunton for the first time, travelling thither say from the south by Peterborough and Grantham, may expect to find a village set in the usual, almost fen-flat land through which the train brings him. But Newark left behind, and the Trent crossed at Kelham Bridge, where the Scotch gave up King Charles, it is quite another story. Here is at once a shooting country and yet a hunting country: hill and hollow, pasture and arable land; fences are here in plenty, but an absence of that monotonous barbed wire and that—to the eye—hardly less aggressive twisted wire, vibrant and threaded through iron rails, a thing we expect to see about the gloomy rhubarb and cabbage fields just outside London and other great towns, but one that robs the country of country feeling.

"Caunton has its beck too—the Caunton Beck—an undoubted trout stream though it feeds the great river of coarse fish: its high banks are willowed all along the manor length of water; there are little pools at each sharp twist, the very spot to hold a fat trout; and above the manor length in the Beesthorpe Park that Capability Brown laid out, the beck is beautifully and densely wooded. It is simple to understand what a hold this pretty little bit of quiet English countryside would have on a man like Dean Hole. I saw it this year in April with everything growing into green or flower, and felt how these little hills preach peace. But if to a stranger the place makes such appeal, how much more to an intimate whose family has been bound up with the fortunes of the village and the manor for generations without a break? There was a Hugh Hole vicar of Caunton in 1567, as a brass in the church tells us; and a Hugh Hole is there to-day. It must be an incurious and unimaginative mind which is not interested in a fact like this. Glimpses of this snug place we get in several of Dean Hole's own books, though it is not always named; and one can understand his large affection for it and the refreshment he must have got out of it, coming thither for a short holiday in the later and harder worked years of his life. The compact little farms, the beck running at the end of the kitchen garden, the paddock for horse exercise, the plantations about the house,

the house and the church, in true manor fashion within a few steps of each other, and the exquisite flower and rose garden—these together do make a very English scene. The sense of oldness yet the sense of freshness all about."

The Caunton Beck, after flowing through the village, pursues a placid eastward course to the village of Norwell, so called in distinction from the South Well of Southwell. It was once a place of importance, for it contained no fewer than six moated houses, and three prebends of Southwell minster—Norwell Overhall, Norwell Palace Hall and Norwell Tertia Pars—and it had a fair and a weekly market. Now it is simply a remote village with an ancient church, possessing an effigy of an unknown knight in the south transept and of an unknown lady in the south aisle of the nave.

In the White Book of Southwell occurs an exceedingly interesting passage showing the obligations of service, on which tenants held their lands at Norwell in the reign of Henry IV. It gives a vivid picture of humble feudal life in the villages, as to which the history books are usually silent.

"All the tenants of the Lord in bondage, as well as free natives, in Norwell, Woodhouse and Willoughby, whereof three only are natives, being charged to declare the truth concerning the customs and services of their tenements, say that everyone holding a bovate of land, or any messuage in the place of a bovate, ought to plough one day in sowing time in the winter, receiving from the Lord for that work whiten bread and pease to the value of three pence and to harrow with one horse, receiving for the same bread to the value of two pence; likewise he is bound to do the same service at Lent sowing at the same price; also to weed with an hoe, for which he is to receive bread to the value of a halfpenny. He ought also, together with his companions, to mow the Lord's meadows in Northyng, containing 13 acres, for which he and the rest of the mowers of the same meadow, whose number is twenty-four, shall eat in the Prebendal House as follows. First, they shall have bread and beer, potage, beef, pork and lamb for the first course, and for the second broth, pigs, ducks, veal or lamb roasted: and after dinner they are to sit and drink, and then go in and out of the hall three times, drinking each time they return, which being done they shall have a bucket of beer, containing eight flagons and a half, which bucket ought to be carried on the shoulders

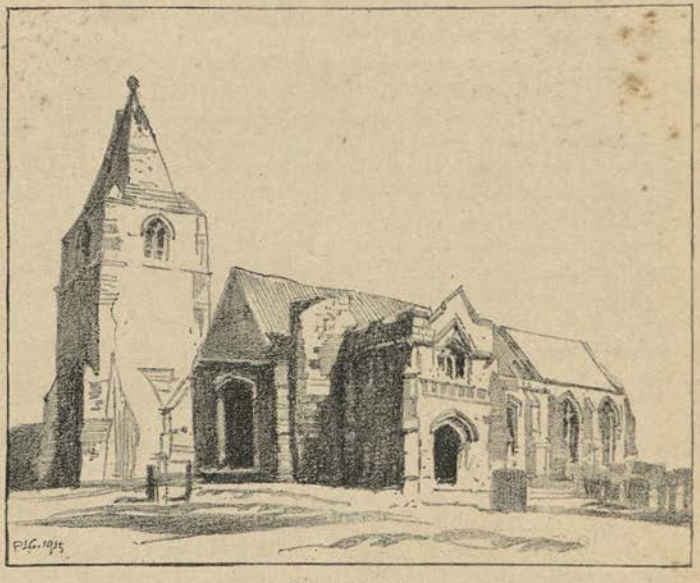
of two men through the midst of the town, from the Prebendal House to the aforesaid meadow, where they are to divert themselves with plays the remainder of the day, at which plays the Lord shall give two pairs of white gloves.

"On the day following the mowing shall be made into heaps, for which work they shall have from the Lord four pence only to drink, and when the hay shall have become dry, all the twenty-four tenants shall carry the same into the manse of the Prebend and there house it, for which they shall have in bread to the value of a penny per cartload, and each person assisting thereat (called Treaders) shall have for his work bread in value a halfpenny, and the aforesaid twenty-four tenants shall mow three acres of the Lord's meadow in the Moor, and they, with the Tossers, carrying the hay from the same meadow shall toss it once and everyone working thereat shall have from the Lord bread to the value of a halfpenny and the Lord shall dispose of the rest; and every tenant holding an entire bovate of land shall with his companions reap the Lord's corn from the beginning to the end of Autumn, with two men, receiving from the Lord each day for everyone at work bread to the value of one penny and three herrings: likewise every tenant shall carry two cartloads of corn from the fields of Norwell to the manse of the Prebend and shall not therefore receive from the Lord anything, and at the end of Autumn the Lord shall give to all his tenants so mowing four pence to drink and one pair of white pigeons."

The details of the gorgeous feast in the Prebendal House, followed by the diversion of plays, are full of interest, and it is worth noting that the custom of mumming at Christmas is still kept up in the district, or was until very few years ago.

From Norwell we cross the main line of the Great Northern Railway to the little village of Cromwell on the Great North Road. The name, of course, challenges attention, but you may search in vain for any trace in Cromwell of the family to which it gave its name. Clinton, a famous "Grecian" of his day, who revolutionised Greek chronology, lived at Cromwell as a boy, while his father was Rector towards the close of the eighteenth century. From Cromwell, we keep the Great North Road towards Newark, passing, if we care to make the short detour, through the two villages of North and South Muskham. Opposite North Muskham, a long struggling village on the Trent, is the little hamlet of Holme—accessible by a ferry—which possesses

one of the few unrestored churches in the county. A little chamber over the south porch is known as Nan Scott's chamber, where an old woman is said to have taken up her abode during the plague in 1666, when Newark lost a third of its inhabitants. Below the window over the porch are seven stone panels, elaborately carved with coats of arms. Inside, the chief feature



Holme Church.

of interest is the tomb of Sir Thomas Barton and his wife, a Lancashire knight and merchant of the staple, who rebuilt the church at the end of the fifteenth century. He had made a fortune in the wool trade, and he piously recorded the fact with gratitude:

> I thank God and ever shall,
> It was the sheep that paid for all.

The village of Holme belongs territorially to the western bank of the Trent, and the story is that the river changed its course

about 1600. From South Muskham Bridge to Newark the Great North Road is carried for a great part of the way upon arches, built by Smeaton, the engineer, in 1779, to raise the highway above the flood level. Muskham Ford, before the bridge was built, was a terror to travellers if the floods were out, and as late as 1739 " the Newcastle waggon " was lost there, and the driver and horses drowned. Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, of rather earlier date, piously thanked God in his Diary when he got safely over the Trent at Newark.

A mile to the west of the bridge at Muskham is the picturesque village of Kelham, where the roads twist about at all manner of odd angles in order to accommodate themselves to the river and the park wall of the big house. It was near Kelham that the Scottish army lay encamped at the siege of Newark ; it was to Kelham that Charles came and surrendered himself to General Leslie, who hardly knew what to do with so embarrassing a captive, and so broke camp and made off North again with what speed he could. It was to Kelham, too, that Pearson, the Newark barber, was fetched to trim King Charles's hair. But his Majesty was so busy that he could not find the time for the operation, and he was so engrossed with weightier matters on the journey north that it was not until he got to distant Newcastle that Pearson had an opportunity of plying his scissors. The little things of history often survive when the big sink into oblivion. Can we not picture the unhappy plight of this poor barber dragged all the way to Newcastle to cut King Charles's hair, with his wife and family wondering what had become of him, and he himself probably suffering miseries in the Scottish camp ; absent for weeks, when he had not expected to be away for more than an afternoon ?

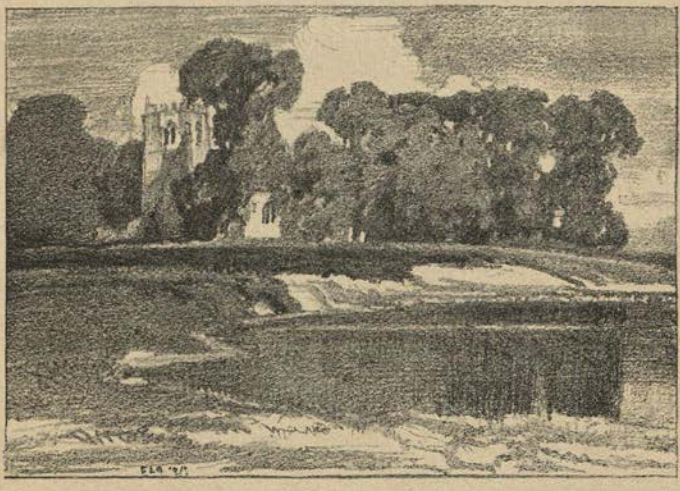
Kelham Hall was the seat of the Suttons and Manners-Suttons, some of whose tombs we shall see at Averham. The Stuart mansion was burnt down in the reign of William and Mary. A new one was built, but this suffered a like fate in 1857, just after it had been extensively altered. In that disastrous fire many valuable heirlooms were destroyed. Then Sir Gilbert Scott built the present house, of red brick with stone facings, in the Italian style, and this is now the College of the Sacred Mission, a Church of England community of men. It was in the Library at Kelham Hall that the Lexington Papers, published in 1851, were discovered. The last Lord Lexington, when British

Ambassador to Madrid, had the misfortune to lose his only son, and it was thought so doubtful whether a Protestant corpse would be allowed to rest quietly in its grave in a Madrid cemetery that Lord Lexington sent the body, wrapped in a bale of cloth, home to England to be buried. Lord Lexington's daughter became the Duchess of Rutland and was the mother of the famous Marquis of Granby, the gallant cavalry leader whose exploits in the Continental wars were the pride of England and whose head still swings on many a public-house sign. One of the Manners-Suttons became Archbishop of Canterbury; another Speaker of the House of Commons; and a third, who lies buried at Kelham, Lord Chancellor of Ireland—not a bad trio of honours even for the days when family connection was more powerful than merit in matters of promotion. An amusing story is told of this Lord Chancellor. He prided himself on his skill in salad-making and gave a lesson in the art to a certain Lady Morgan. When it fell to his duty to order one of her books to be burnt because of its seditious character, he turned to his wife and said, "Jenny, I wish I had not given her the secret of my salad."

Kelham Bridge over the Trent was the scene of a remarkable accident during the severe frost of the winter of 1854–5. A great sheet of ice, when the frost broke up, struck the two rows of piles nearest to the village, and half the bridge instantly fell. Five carts had crossed a moment before, and a young man was in the middle when the crash came. He started to run, and, as luck would have it, ran the right way.

A mile from Kelham up the Trent towards Nottingham is Averham, pronounced Areham, at the cross-roads of which, a little more than a century ago, in 1815, the accommodation coach from Nottingham to Newark, via Southwell, was upset through the carelessness of the driver, and one unfortunate passenger was killed and several others injured. Averham's sole distinction is its parish church, hidden well away from the high road, close by the side of Trent. It vies with Laneham for charm of situation, for the river here makes one of its most stately sweeps, and there is a glorious uninterrupted view across the flat meadows on the other side to Newark and its tall spire. They chose well who chose this site, and they built a church worthy of the setting. The rectory gardens at its side are what the eighteenth century would have called "elegant." In the vestry of the church is a tablet to the Rev. Charles Sutton, who died in 1785

at the age of 76: "A man of cheerful and social disposition, and generous hospitality, joined to elegance of manners and a taste for the polite arts." He was Rector of Averham for over half a century, and after the manner of his time he was also a Prebendary of Canterbury and Rector of Whitwell, in Derbyshire. Just the sort of rector, in fact, to require a fine rectory, and we are probably doing his memory no injustice and paying a due tribute to his taste in suspecting that it was he who planted that



Averham.

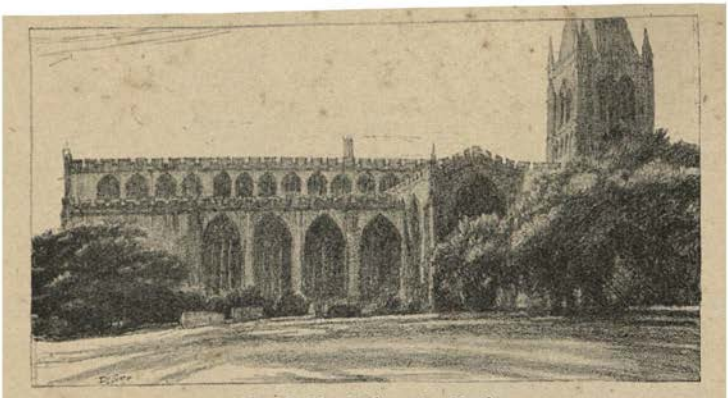
delightful cedar and built himself that snug parsonage. Averham was a family living of the Suttons, and so it naturally passed on to his son Charles Manners-Sutton, who in his turn was Rector for forty-three years (1785-1828), and it was his eldest son, another Charles, who was for some years Speaker of the House of Commons and became, on his retirement, Viscount Canterbury.

The Chancel of the beautiful church, which has recently been oak-seated and oak-pannelled in charming taste, is full of Suttons. The largest memorial, which occupies half one side of the wall, celebrates the virtues of William Sutton, who died in 1611. He reclines in state upon his marble tomb, and below

are Latin and English poems extolling his merits. The English one is not without humour :—

> Sir William Sutton's corps here toombèd sleeps,
> Whose happy soul in better mansions keeps ;
> Thrice nine years lived he with his lady faire,
> A lovely, noble and like vertuous payer ;
> Their generous offspring (parent's joy of heart)
> Eight of each sex, of each an equal part,
> Ushered to heaven their father, and the other
> Remained behind him to attend their mother.

One of those who remained behind to attend his mother was Robert Sutton, whose memorial confronts that of his father. He was a man of some prominence during the Civil War. Taking the Royalist side, he naturally found himself in Newark during its sieges and in 1645 contrived to induce Charles to create him Baron Lexington for his services in raising money. Mrs. Hutchinson attacks him violently for his harsh conduct towards the Colonel at the Restoration in the matter of " the Newarkers' money," and accuses him of being at the bottom of many of the Colonel's troubles, but Mrs. Hutchinson always omitted the other side of the story when her dear husband was concerned.



Newark Church from the North.

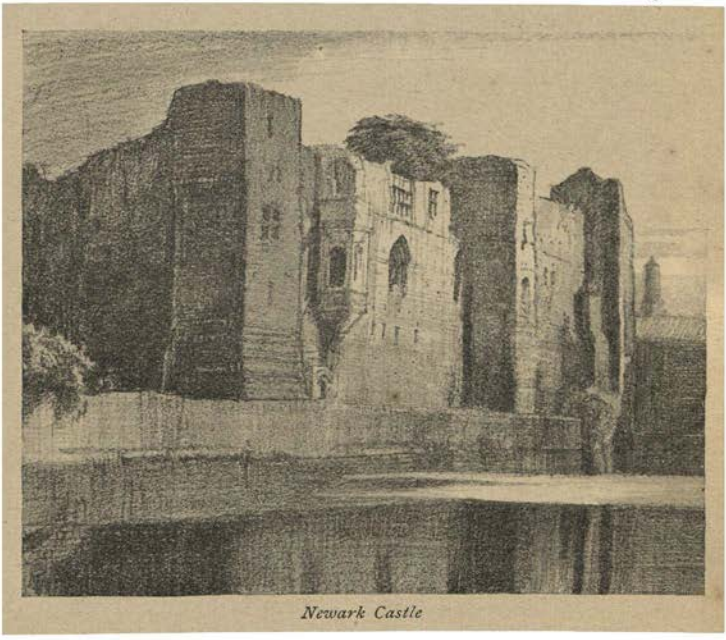
CHAPTER XXV

NEWARK-ON-TRENT

FORTUNATE, indeed, is the county which includes Newark within its borders. For Newark, which John Wesley described in 1786 as one of the most elegant towns in England, is favoured in almost every respect wherein an inland town can be favoured. It is small, yet big enough to have a real character of its own and to possess industries which bring occupation to many and wealth to a few, but still it is not so big as to tempt it to adventures and large schemes of improvement or to ambition to be called a city, and other vainglory of that sort. You can walk right though Newark from end to end and be out in the fields again without growing tired of its streets. Moreover, Newark has a castle and a glorious history, and a church with a spire that is a joy to look upon, and a Market Place, where you can be brisk if you choose, and plenty of old inns, where you can dawdle away an idle hour, in sight of the printing shop where Byron printed his "Hours of Idleness," and many old buildings and quaint courtyards. Then it has a good stretch of Roman road, not to mention the Great North Road along which you can whisk away to Scotland and scarcely encounter a stone to jar your rolling progress. And finally, it has not one river only, but two. No wonder, then, that Newark has a place in English history, and no wonder she has found worthy and loving historians to trace back her ancient chronicles to incredibly mythical days, and

produce such painstaking books as those to which the late Mr. Cornelius Brown dedicated so much patient labour.

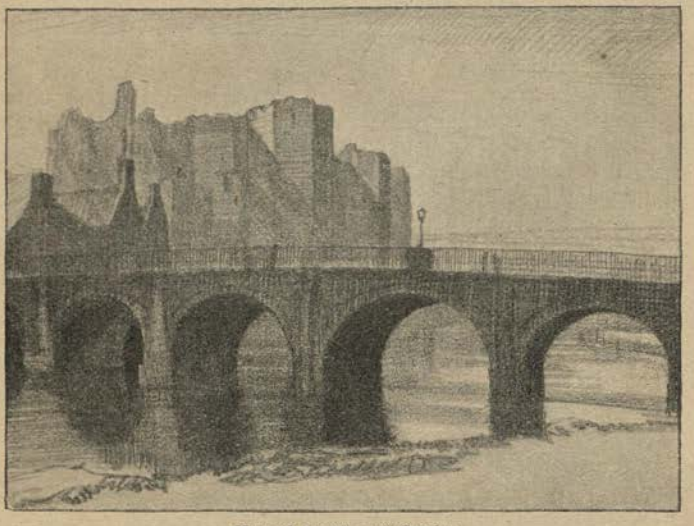
Newark is charming to-day, but I should like to have seen it as the traveller to London saw it in the old days, especially if he approached it by the Ollerton road and so caught his first glimpse of the spire as he dropped down Debdale Hill to Kelham. But even at South Muskham the view used to draw delighted



Newark Castle

exclamations from the "outsides," as the coach clattered over the bridge and along the raised road which Smeeton built above the flood-level of the capricious Trent. Rowlandson drew a lively sketch of a coach bowling briskly along over the wooden bridge near the castle walls, that gave place to a more substantial structure in 1775, and one can imagine the passengers turning and asking, just as every succeeding generation of passengers asks, "Pray, what river is this? I thought we had already passed the Trent." As, indeed, they had, but this is another

Trent, a loop of the river which divagated from the main channel a few miles away between Farndon and Averham, and then received the tributary of the Devon (pronounced Deevon) and so wanders round this way—canalised, as will be perceived—under the castle walls to rejoin the Trent at Crankley Point, near Winthorpe. Thus it is that the town's name of Newark-upon-Trent is not a little misleading. The Trent has changed its



Newark Castle and Bridge.

channel many times in this neighbourhood, and would doubtless do so again were he not carefully curbed and vigilantly guarded.

Here then is the Castle, looking pleasantly down upon the stream, "slighted" with gunpowder and now a mere shell, yet still wearing a brave look on this side at least and with a single graceful oriel window in the great hall which suggests not war but gaiety. At its side the massive Norman gate-house and south-west tower still stand in fair preservation. The rest has gone. It was a spiritual Peer who built the early Norman castle of Newark, but Bishop Alexander of Lincoln (1123–1147) had good cause to regret his taste for fortifications. For Stephen

threw him into prison until he consented to hand the castle over to the Crown, and so the Bishop knew the bitterness of building a strong nest for another to occupy. A little later, in 1216, King John came here to die on St. Luke's Day, after being suddenly taken ill, two or three days before, at Swineshead Abbey. They still point out the window of the room where he is said to have expired, but with rapidly waning confidence in the truth of the tradition. The castle, which had been recovered from the Crown by the Bishops of Lincoln, remained in their possession till 1547, and underwent the various transformations required to keep the building abreast of the standards of comfort of succeeding generations. The oriel window, for example, is believed to date from the time of Bishop Scot, of Rotherham, who was Bishop of Lincoln from 1471 to 1480. Then, in 1547, the castle once more passed by exchange to the Crown, and so remained till 1888, when it became the property of the Corporation of Newark, who laid out public gardens on the site of the old courtyard, which for many years had been put to the baser uses of a Cattle Market. The history of the castle during the Civil War shall be told in another chapter.

The road from the bridge to the town soon enters Castlegate, which is on the line of the old Fosse Way, and thence it is but a step or two, up any one of the narrow streets, into the spacious Market Place. "A very clean and very well-built town" observed Arthur Young, as he came this way in 1769. Who will challenge such a verdict as he looks about him in the Market Place?

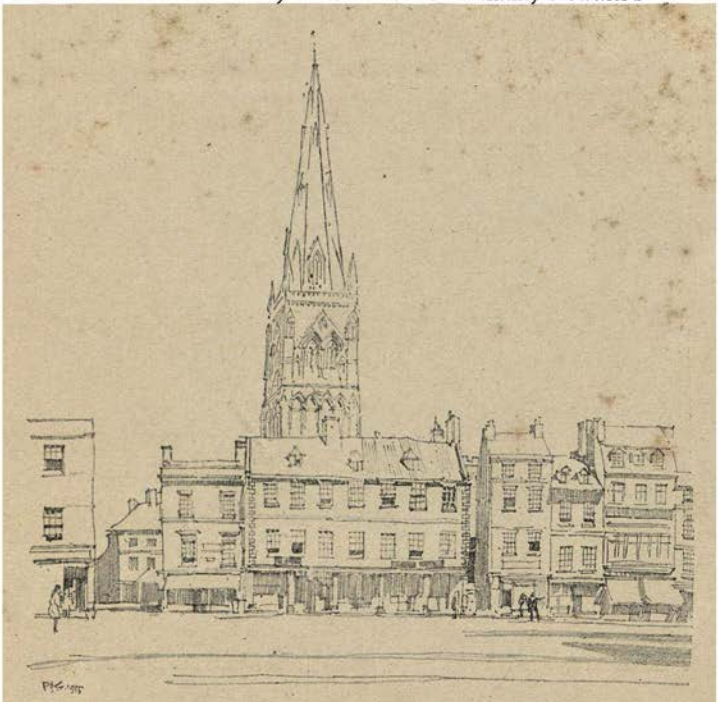
> E'en now as thy fine structures I survey,
> And thro' thy cleanly streets delighted stray,
> Methinks with such unrivalled beauty won
> A lovelier town ne'er smiled beneath the sun.

So sang, or thought he sang, a Newark poet, Bousfield by name, in the year 1826. Those are his best lines. When he came to the Town Hall, which still frowns heavily upon the square, he contrived this couplet:—

> Here beauteous rooms their weary length extend,
> Where scarce the eye can glance from end to end.

But that is too much even for poetic licence. The most myopic person would find no difficulty in seeing from end to end of the Newark Town Hall.

No one thinks of leaving Newark without a visit to its famous parish church, the pride of the town, as its beautiful spire is the pride of the surrounding country. What affection these famous spires excite! The tapering spire of Salisbury Cathedral, the Three Sisters of Lichfield Cathedral, the spire of Ashover, the Pride of the Peak, or that of Grantham, Newark's near

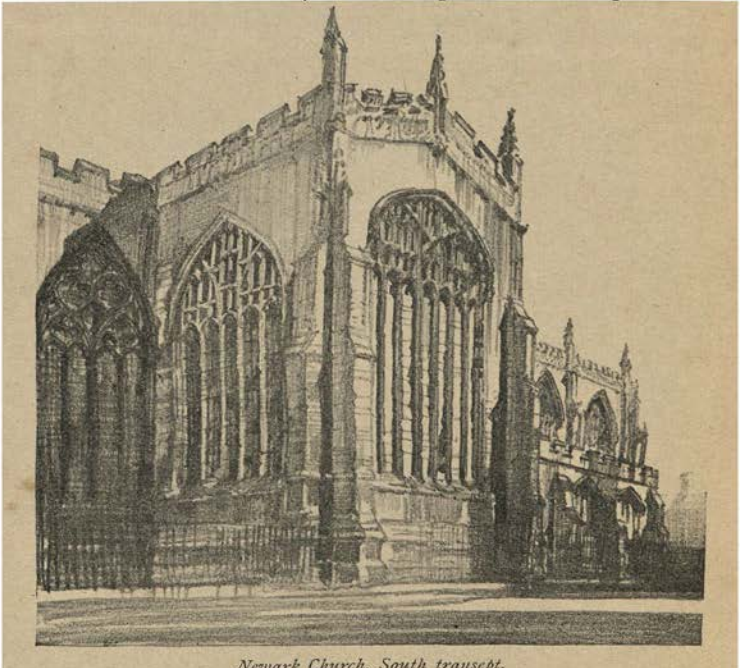


The Market Place, Newark.

rival; people grow to love them who have little interest in or love for the churches themselves. *Sursum corda* is the message of the spire, and the heart responds and is glad. The spire of St. Mary's Newark, 252 feet high, is not quite so tall as that of Grantham, and about a century ago it lost ten feet of its final taper, but its beauty is unchallenged. The same masons were

at work here as at Grantham, completing it by about the year 1330, just before the Black Death of 1349, which brought the rebuilding of the body of the church to a sudden standstill. For nearly six centuries, therefore, this exquisite spire has delighted the eyes of the thousands of travellers who have passed along one of the busiest thoroughfares of England.

The church itself richly fulfils the promise of the spire. The



Newark Church, South transept.

large nave is lighted by magnificent Decorated windows and the clerestory windows above. The north transept is bare and plain; the south was in old times the Chapel of the Holy Trinity and used by the Guild of the Sacred Trinity, which was the most important guild in Newark before the town had a Corporation. Here is the famous Fleming brass, one of the largest of its kind, consisting of 16 separate plates of brass, incredibly

elaborate in its architectural ornamentation and dating from the middle of the fourteenth century. But finer even than the brasses—for brasses are an acquired taste—is the beautiful oak rood-screen, which originally extended across the chancel aisles as well as the chancel opening. Even now it is 36 feet 6 inches in width, 16 feet in height, and consists of nineteen bays, wonderfully carved with a wide projection at the top. This screen and its parcloses, which date from about 1500, are said to have been the work of Thomas Drawsword, of York, and so fine an artist well deserves remembrance. The chancel is notable for its miserere stalls and its surviving chantry chapels. The Markham Chapel on the South side contains two curious panel pictures, usually called the Dance of Death. One shows a richly-dressed young man taking money from his purse: the other depicts a grinning skeleton, pointing to the grave with one hand while in the other he holds a flower. The pictures are not pleasing. One might, indeed, fairly call them hideous. But moralists drew their morals bluntly in the days when these were painted. A fanciful legend connects this rich young man with Perkin Warbeck, but there is no warrant for the ascription.

> Golden lads and lasses must,
> Like chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

That is the simple moral of the so-called Dance of Death.

Newark church is not rich in monuments. It contains none of the alabaster effigies in which many of the village churches of the county are so rich. Colonel Charles Cavendish, who fell at Gainsborough, was brought here for burial, but when the war was over the Cavendishes transferred the coffin to the family vault in All Saints, Derby. He was only 23 years old, when, as Cromwell said in his despatch, "my Captain-Lieutenant slew him with a thrust under the short ribs," after, so it was said at the time, he had been offered and had accepted quarter. Edmund Waller sang his praise in worthy verse:—

> Here lies Charles Ca'ndish: let the marble stone,
> That hides his ashes, make his virtue known.
> Beauty and valour did his short life grace,
> The grief and glory of his noble race.
> Early abroad he did the world survey,
> As if he knew he had not long to stay.

Saw what great Alexander in the East
And mighty Julius conquered in the West,
Then, with a mind as great as theirs, he came
To find at home occasion for his fame,
Where dark confusion did the nations hide,
And where the juster was the weaker side.

There are two quaint monuments in the western angles of the choir, to Thomas Atkinson and Robert Ramsey, and a third

Newark Church from the East.

and similar one to John Johnson (1659), "twice Mayor of the loyall and unanimous Corporation of Newark," is in the north chancel aisle. These three are evidently of local handiwork, and like most half-effigies, where the body is chopped off short in the middle, and the torso is framed, as it were, in a window, the result is somewhat ludicrous. Another memorial near the organ commemorates the virtues of Hercules Clay, who left an endowment for a sermon and an annual dole of bread. This was in gratitude for mercies received. Hercules Clay lived in Newark during the Civil War, and on the night of March 11,

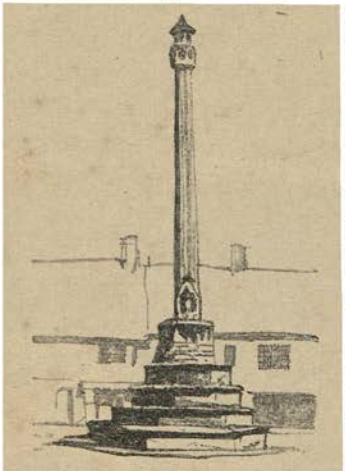
1643, he dreamed that his house was on fire. When he had dreamed the same dream three nights running, he came to the conclusion that it was a sign and a warning, so he moved his household to another place. And he and his family were no sooner out of the house than the Parliamentary gunners dropped a bomb plump on to his dwelling and set it on fire. So runs the story, into which it boots not to enquire too closely, for it may be doubted whether such a feat was possible from the fort on Beacon Hill. But Penny Loaf Day is still observed in Newark, and a thousand small loaves are annually given away at the Town Hall in memory of Hercules Clay's providential escape.

Of the stained glass in Newark church not much that is flattering can be said. The east window of the south aisle of the chancel is a patchwork composed of such fragments as remain of the old glass in which the church was once very rich. The rest is modern, and the taste of one decade is not always that of the next. Some may still admire the large Prince Consort memorial window at the east end, but to most eyes it will seem as out of date as Hilton's big canvas of the Raising of Lazarus, which hangs on the south wall of the nave. This served as an altar-piece for many years, and was presented to the church because Hilton's father was a native of Newark. He was esteemed a great artist in his day, like his contemporary Benjamin Haydon, but his vogue is dead. Yet the picture lingers in the church, as pictures and windows, however unpleasing, are wont to do. They seem to acquire a sort of prescriptive right to their places, and endure till the next "restoration," unless some happy accident intervenes.

In the library over the south porch is a collection of books bequeathed by Bishop White, of Peterborough, one of the Seven Bishops who braved the displeasure of James II. and were sent by him to the Tower. White was a Newark man, educated at the Magnus Grammar School, and he left his books for the benefit of the local clergy. There they lie accumulating dust and growing deader and deader as the years roll by. Most of the rarities are said to have vanished since they were catalogued at the restoration of the church in 1855. A York Hymnal, printed at Rouen in 1520, which was found in the choir on removing the seats, was sold by the Churchwardens for £50, for the benefit of the restoration fund.

A minor feature of interest in Newark is the Beaumond Cross,

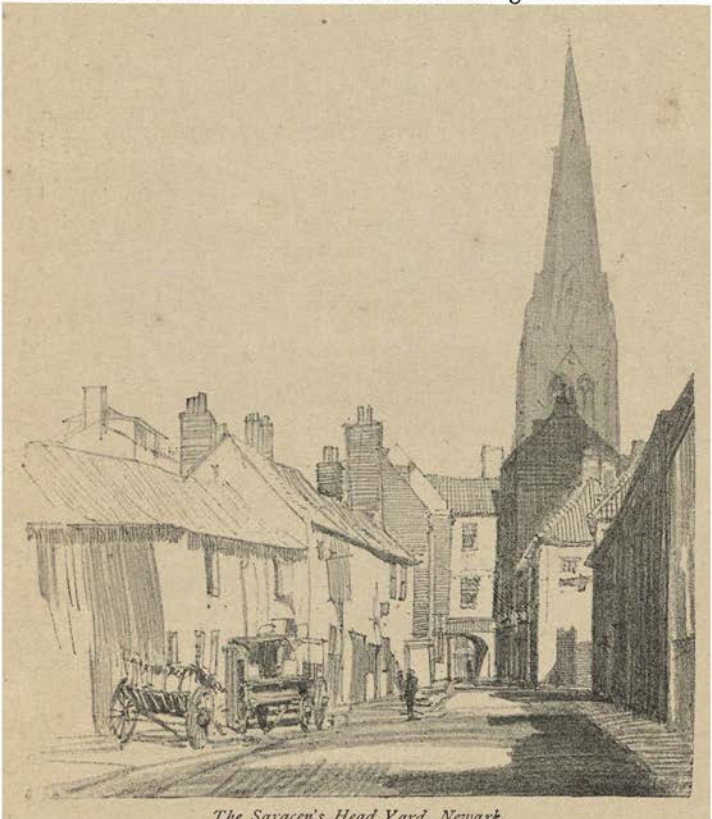
standing where the Great North Road from the south bisects the Fosse Way. It consists of a graceful shaft rising from a plinth, which is itself raised upon steps. At the base of the shaft is a canopied niche with the figure of some saint, much too weather-worn to be recognisable, and at the top is an ornamental capital with other smaller niches and smaller saintly figures. The cross has borne the name of Le Beaumond from 1310, but its origin is unknown. Mr. Stevenson, a well-known Notts antiquary, has urged with considerable force that this is one of the Queen Eleanor crosses. The Queen, as everyone knows, died at Harby in 1290, and her husband, King Edward, put up a cross wherever the body rested on its journey to Westminster. It seems to me quite reasonable to suppose that the route lay through Newark. From Harby, which is just within the county on the border of Lincolnshire, the body was taken to Lincoln to be embalmed, and may very well have been carried from Lincoln to London by way of Newark, where the Bishop of Lincoln, who conducted the funeral ceremony at Westminster, was also lord of Newark Castle. This is just as probable as that the mourners took the shorter road from Lincoln to Grantham. Good roads were very scarce in England in those days, and it is pertinent to remember that the Queen died in mid-winter, when the by-roads were almost impassable. "I loved her tenderly," said the King, writing to the Abbot of Clugny, "and I do not cease to love her now that she is dead." If the route did lie through Newark, it is certain that the King would not omit to put up a cross there, as he did at Lincoln, Grantham, Stamford, and other places on the journey to London. It is, indeed, strange that the tradition should have been forgotten, when it was cherished so tenderly in the other towns, but no other explanation that has been offered of the Beaumond Cross seems



The Beaumond Cross, Newark.

half so reasonable. The name Beaumond is merely the ancient name of that part of the town.

Newark contains several old inns interesting alike for them-



The Saracen's Head Yard, Newark.

selves and for their associations. The principal ones stand, as they should, in the Market Place, where the tide of activity flows fastest and fullest, and the Saracen's Head and Clinton Arms between them take up no inconsiderable portion of one side of the square. The Saracen's Head is the older, and there

has been an inn of that name in Newark from the year 1341. In the seventeenth century it belonged to the Twentyman family, one member of which so delighted King James with his Latin speech of welcome to Newark, that his Majesty promptly made him purveyor of wax to the King's household. Tradition says that Charles I. spent a night beneath its roof, and Sir Walter Scott frequently passed under its arch on his way to and from London. He introduced it into the "Heart of Midlothian," as the place where Jeanie Deans stayed on her journey to see the king. In his "Diary" Sir Walter referred to "the remarkably civil and gentlemanly manners of the person who now keeps the principal inn," and contrasts them with those of "his more rough predecessor," the latter being one William Thompson, who was landlord from 1784 to 1819. The Clinton Arms, next door, has memories of Byron. It was called the Kingston Arms at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the poet used to ride over from Southwell, in order to see the proofs of the verses which Ridge, the bookseller at the corner of the square, was publishing for him. "The Kingston Arms is my house," wrote Byron, thus casually giving his address in a letter, and the chance words have been carefully treasured.

Another poet of much humbler fame had stayed there before Byron. This was Charles Dibdin, the author of "Tom Bowling" and scores of other sea-songs. He was at Newark in 1788 giving concerts in the assembly room of the Kingston Arms, then kept by a man called Midgeley, who had been cook to the Dowager Princess of Wales, and reserved his civility, apparently, for his aristocratic patrons. It was only when Dibdin mentioned that Lord and Lady Lincoln were patronising his concerts that Midgeley condescended to attend to him, and Dibdin paid off the score by scarifying him in his Journal. The concerts were not very successful either at Newark or at Nottingham, where the Mayor had said to Dibdin, "I hope you don't come with drums and trumpets. I don't want a hubbub in the town." And he only gave permission for Dibdin to hire the rooms on being assured that the concert would not "corrupt the morals of the prentices and the workfolk." Those were the days when the Mayor of a town like Nottingham thought it beneath his dignity to know anything about music, and entertained a shrewd suspicion that no one would be a musician if he were not an idle fellow with a taste for vagabondage and bad morals.

The same inn was also the headquarters of Mr. Gladstone in 1832, when he was contesting Newark, as the nominee of the Duke of Newcastle, but by that time it had taken its present name. While Gladstone was speaking from one of its windows, a man hurled a stone which broke a pane within a foot of his head, but the culprit was caught and let off on promise of his vote on the following day. Electioneering a century ago was much more strenuous work than it is now. Here is Gladstone's own account of the way he spent a day while conducting his canvass :—

" We started on canvass at 8 in the morning and worked at it for about 9 hours, with a great crowd, band and flags and innumerable glasses of beer and wine all jumbled together; then a dinner of 30 or 40 with speeches and songs until, say 10 o'clock: then we always played a rubber of whist and about 12 or 1 I got to bed but not to sleep, for never in my life did I undergo any excitement to be compared to it. My account of the day is faithful, except that I have omitted a public house tour of speaking to the Red clubs, with which I often had to top up after the dinner and before the whist."

Mr. Gladstone was no worse for the experience and he came out handsomely at the top of the poll. A relic of that bygone election, which first gave him a seat in the House of Commons, is treasured at the Newark Museum. It is a faded silk banner bearing the words, " Gladstone and the Conservative Cause."

The Newcastle influence in Newark was for many years paramount. " Wilde and Liberty " had been the motto of the Radical Sergeant Wilde—afterwards Lord Truro and Lord Chancellor—who had won the borough at the previous election, and " Wilde and Independence " was inscribed on the mugs which he distributed to the electors at a gargantuan feast in a huge tent in the market square, which was made the subject of a contemporary engraving.

The Duke he has our member choosed;
The right to us he has refused;
Our Liberty he has abused;
And are we yet his slaves?

No more his yoke we will put on,
We'll bid the tyrant to be gone,
To Clumber he may go and mourn,
For Newark will be free.

Nevertheless, despite this poetry and other similar doggerel, in the authorship of which Charles Lamb is said to have taken a hand, Newark continued to hug its chains and faithfully returned Mr. Gladstone, as the Duke's nominee, at every election from 1832 to 1846. Then he retired, because he had supported Peel in the Repeal of the Corn Laws, of which his patron was one of the most uncompromising supporters.

Another old Newark inn is the Ram, opposite the castle on Beastmarket Hill, where George Eliot stayed for a few days in 1868, enjoying, as she said, "some charming, quiet landscapes on the Trent." All these inns have preserved their old-fashioned look, their coaching yards, and archway entrances. But the most ancient inn in Newark was the White Hart in the south-western corner of the Market Square, now a draper's shop. The façade dates from the middle of the fourteenth century, and fronting the street, on the first floor, is a long row of canopied plaster niches, many of which still retain their original figures. Above this floor used to be an open gallery, but this has been covered in with glass. The original archway also survives and gives access to a curious courtyard of irregular shape, containing a strange medley of stables and outhouses. There is also another big yard at the back of the Queen's Head, near the north-west corner of the square.

Nor is it only in ancient inns that Newark is rich. Just at the entrance to Stodman Street is the picturesque Governor's House, where various Governors of the Castle lived during the siege. This has an extensive wing at the back in Hardy's Yard. The Chantry House, on the site of the house built for the Chantry priests who served in the parish church, is a beautiful Queen Anne mansion with garden and small deer park. Close by is the old Magnus Grammar School, now made over in part to the local museum. Thomas Magnus, its founder, is one of the most notable worthies of Newark. Tradition says that while a company of Yorkshire clothiers, on their way home from London, lay at Newark, a young child was deserted at their inn, and they were so moved with pity that they clubbed together and raised the money for its upbringing. The foundling did them credit. He minded his book so well as to attract the notice of Wolsey, who took him into his own household and sent him on confidential errands to Scotland and to the Emperor Charles V. Henry VIII. made him one of his chaplains and gave him the Wardenship

of the College of Sibthorpe in Notts., and in gratitude to his native town, Magnus founded, in 1532, the Grammar School, which has turned out many distinguished men, including Dr. Stukeley, the antiquary; Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, and, in more modern times, Dean Hole. The stone building was refronted in 1819 with an ugly brick face; and the school was in considerable repute during the middle of the nineteenth century as a boarding school, most of the houses in the picturesque street being utilised as dormitories. Now the Grammar School has been moved out into a more open situation. The Newark museum is a very modest affair, and notable chiefly for the Roman relics discovered at Littleborough.

Dr. Warburton, whose name is prominent among the famous sons of Newark, was a son of the Town Clerk, who lived in the good brick house in Cartergate, which now bears a tablet to commemorate the event. Warburton studied law and was a candidate for his father's post when it fell vacant, but failing of success he entered the Church and was given in 1728, by Sir Robert Sutton, the living of Brant Broughton, a Lincolnshire village a few miles to the east of Newark. There he lived for eighteen years and there he wrote "The Divine Legation of Moses," which brought him fame and promotion. Once on the ladder he mounted high. Prebendary of Gloucester, King's Chaplain, Prebendary of Durham, Dean of Bristol—such were the steps which led him in 1759 to the Bishopric of Gloucester. "Nothing of a private nature," wrote the elder Pitt, "since he had been in office, gave him so much pleasure as his bringing Dr. Warburton on the bench." The Bishop was a famous controversialist whether in politics, theology or literature. He carried a big stick and brandished it violently. Gibbon called him the "dictator and tyrant of the world of literature;" Bolingbroke, in excusing himself from further controversy, said that he had "no desire to wrestle with a chimney sweep." But perhaps Bentley's *mot* was the best and truest when he said of Warburton that he had "a monstrous appetite with a bad digestion." It was characteristic of him that he considered his abilities inadequately recompensed. When Dr. Hurd congratulated him on his promotion he said, "It comes too late; if my mother had been living it might have given me some satisfaction." Yet he was Bishop of Gloucester for twenty years!

To the end of his days, he spoke of Newark with affection. "It would have been the greatest pleasure," he once wrote to Charles Yorke, "to have dropped upon you at Newark. I could have led you through delicious walks and picked off for your amusement a thousand notions, which I hung upon every thorn as I passed thirty years ago." And again he wrote:—"I now enjoy little pleasure compared to what I formerly had in an autumn morning, when I used, with book in hand, to traverse the delightful lawns and hedgerows round about the town of Newark, the unthinking place of my nativity." Why "unthinking"? The epithet has caused the Newarkers of later generations some searching of heart. Probably it meant no more than an episcopal rebuke—rather in sorrow than in anger—at the want of appreciation which Newark had shown of his genius while he lived in his birthplace. But it is an old story that a prophet has no honour in his own country. *Extinctus amabitur idem.*

CHAPTER XXVI

NEWARK CASTLE AND THE CIVIL WAR; THE QUEEN'S SCONCE; HAWTON; STAUNTON

NEWARK'S connection with the Civil War is one of undimmed glory. She was on the losing side, but that only made her fidelity the more honourable. All through Newark stood firm for the King, enduring repeated sieges, but never taken by assault, and when at last Charles sent an order to the brave garrison to submit, the order had to be repeated before the Governor would obey, and the citizens besought him on their knees to keep the King's flag flying. No town in England has better cause to be proud of its old ruined castle than Newark-upon-Trent.

A glance at the map is enough to show Newark's strategic importance, which was far greater in the seventeenth century than it would be to-day. For then there was no bridge over Trent between Newark and Nottingham, and no bridge whatsoever between Newark and the Humber. Then, as now, the Great North Road passed through Newark, and the possession of the town and the bridges was of the first military importance. And, as Nottingham was held for the Parliament, it became all the more vital that Newark should be held for the King. So, at the very outbreak of the troubles, the Royalists of the Midlands threw a strong force into Newark and built strong defences. The repeated efforts made by the Parliamentarians to capture it are the best indications of its military value.

The first regular siege took place at Candlemass, 1643, when Newark was invested by a force under Colonel Hutchinson on the western side and a Lincolnshire force under Ballard on the east. According to Mrs. Hutchinson, Ballard refused to advance at the critical moment, and the attack failed. Profiting by their escape, the Newarkers strengthened their defences, and in the next few months vigorously took the offensive and were much cheered by the arrival in their midst of Queen Henrietta with

strong reinforcements of horse and foot. The ladies of Newark begged the Queen not to leave till Nottingham should be taken, but she rebuked them, saying, "Ladies, affairs of this nature are not in our sphere. I am commanded by the King to make all haste to him that I can. You will receive this advantage at least by my action—you may learn by my example to obey your husbands." Soon after the Queen's departure the Newarkers suffered a grievous blow in the disastrous defeat of Colonel Charles Cavendish at Gainsborough. With him, in that luckless fight, fell many other prominent Cavaliers of the Midlands, and here Cromwell first showed his mettle as a commanding officer and his skill in directing a battle. Notwithstanding this serious reverse, the Newarkers made a gallant effort to surprise Nottingham Castle a few weeks later, and for a few days were masters of the town and the Trent Bridge.

This aggressiveness on their part led the Parliament Committee to order that Newark should again be besieged, and in 1644 the investing lines were drawn more closely than before. Sir Michael Hubbard was stationed at Balderton to watch the road from the south; Lord Willoughby of Parham held a hill a mile to the east of the town, and Sir John Meldrum had his headquarters at the Spittle to the north-west. The garrison ran short of provisions and suffered the mortification of seeing a convoy for their relief snapped up under their very eyes. Meldrum was confident that he had only to wait and Newark must fall into his hands, when Prince Rupert suddenly appeared in the neighbourhood with a relieving force and sent in a cheery message to the Governor. "Let the old drum," said he, "be beaten on the north side early in the morning!" The drum was beaten as directed. Rupert's cavalry charged in from Coddington on the east; the garrison made a furious sortie and Sir John Meldrum surrendered. Rupert gained 4,000 arms, 11 cannon and 60 barrels of powder; and after revictualling the town and replenishing its munitions of war, he marched off in triumph to York. But alas! the way to York was also the way to Marston Moor, where the Royalist army of the North came to a disastrous end.

For the next twelve months Newark escaped serious attention, and its garrison continued as before to make sudden dashes and swoops, which caused annoyance rather than serious damage to the local Parliamentary forces and had no real influence on the

course of the war. The Newark cavalry might snap up small posts and convoys, but the Parliament won Naseby Fight; and after that it was only a question of waiting for the end. From time to time a Parliament army appeared before Newark Castle and on one occasion a curious incident happened. Sir Marmaduke Langdale, coming up to the relief, could not get into touch with the garrison, and as the night was dark, he sent four of his regiments to make a circuit of the defences on the east side, until they got opposite to the castle and surprised the garrison in the morning by showing themselves on the other side of the river. It must have been a very reckless performance, but at any rate it succeeded, and the garrison got in a supply of provisions and arms.

But after Naseby's fatal field on June 14, 1645, the Royalist commanders in Newark must have known that their doom was fixed. Their field army was shattered to pieces. The King, with a few fragments collected from the rout, was a fugitive, continually moving from place to place, and glad even of temporary security. Just two months after the battle we find him in Derbyshire, making his way towards faithful Newark. As the Trent valley was unsafe, the route selected was by Chatsworth and then over the high moors to Chesterfield and Welbeck. Among his company was an officer named Symonds, a keen loyalist and a keen antiquary, who even in the midst of war did not neglect his hobby, but visited every old church and mansion for which he had leisure and carefully noted down in his diary descriptions of the most interesting things he saw. From that diary we can trace the restless journeyings of the King through Nottinghamshire. Here it is in brief:—

"Aug. 15. Friday (from Chatsworth) to Welbeck, a garrison, where Colonel Fretesvil is Governor. King's Guards at Warsop.

"Saturday. Rested.

"Sunday, after sermon at Welbeck, the King went into Yorkshire and lay at ——, General Gerard lay at Tick-hill. King's Guards at Doncaster.

"Monday
"Tuesday } Rested at Doncaster.

"Wednesday. To Retford, the King's quarters.

"Thursday. The King and Court went to Newarke. The King's regiment of horseguards to Southwell.

"Friday. To Belvoir Castle, where one Lucas, sometime horsekeeper to the Earle of Rutland, is Governor.

"Saturday. To Stamford.

"Sunday. To Huntingdon."

So the endless round proceeded—the King's guards always thrown out a few miles ahead of the royal resting place in the direction from which danger might possibly be threatened. Irresolution and shifting counsel can be read even in the barest details of the itinerary. The abrupt reversal of route at Doncaster is a sure sign that disappointing news had come from the north, whence the King was perpetually hoping for help.

By October, Charles was back again at Newark, after having wandered through Wales and the West of England in the meanwhile, and Symonds gives the following interesting particulars as to the dispositions of his forces:

"The court, horseguards, and Sir Marmaduke Langdale's horse at Newarke, and Newarke horse, now about 300, there too.

"General Gerard's horseguards at Belvoir, his regiment gone into Wales.

"Earl of Northampton's regiment at Wirton, a garrison of ours commanded by Major Honywood.

"Sir Wm. Blakeston's, Prince Rupert's remainder, Lucas 50 are at Welbeck. Toto 120."

Shelford, where part of the Queen's Regiment was stationed, was stormed and taken soon after the King's arrival in Newark, and the garrison put to the sword.

Opinion in Newark was much divided as to the best course to be adopted in a situation which grew more desperate day by day. Sir Richard Willis, the Governor, was for staking all on a last throw. His counsel was that the King should collect the soldiers out of all his garrisons, put them together in a body, and march after Fairfax, who was then near Taunton, in Somerset. Newark, Ashby, Tutbury, Lichfield, Belvoir, Bridgnorth, Denbigh, and a few other places still held out. "Slight them all," said the gallant Sir Richard, "and all inland garrisons, keep your ports at Exeter and Bristol, and you will have cannon and a very considerable army to fight Fairfax." It is said that the King liked the plan well. Digby also approved and Ashburnham "embraced Sir Richard for the proposition." But others raised objections and could not bring themselves to abandon their strong places for the sake of acquiring mobility

in the field. What finally defeated the proposal, however, was the persistent rumour that the Duke of Montrose had gained a complete victory over Leslie and was marching south into England to save the King. There was no foundation for the story, but it spread so fast and it was so heartily welcome that it soon passed for unquestioned fact. The King, therefore, determined to march north with the bulk of his forces. Passing through Tuxford he crossed the forest to Welbeck, and there called a Council of War, at which it was decided, after much debate, to march the next day to Rotherham. But then fell the inevitable bolt from the blue :—

"Just as the officers were rising to give orders one knocked at the door, who, being called in, was found to be the Trumpeter formerly sent from Cardiff to the Scottish army with a letter to the Earl of Leven, General thereof ; who had taken him with him as far as Berwick, before he would suffer him to be discharged. The King asked him what he had heard of the Marquis of Montrose. He answered that the last news he had heard of him was that he was about Stirling, retiring farther north ; and that David Leslie was in Lothian, on this side Edenborough, and that the Scottish Army lay between North Allerton and Newcastle."

This information, which put the truth beyond all doubt, shattered all their high hopes and necessitated an immediate change of plan. It was decided that the King should retire to Newark and that Sir Marmaduke Langdale should take all the horse with him and join the Duke of Montrose in Scotland. Sir Marmaduke begged that Lord Digby might have the chief command and he be second, and so it was arranged. Digby, therefore, marched off with 1,500 horse, only to be routed at Sherborne in Yorkshire, and though he contrived to re-form his broken troops at Skipton, and pushed through over the border to Dumfries, no one knew Montrose's whereabouts and the remains of the force soon melted away. King Charles returned to Newark with 800 Guards, and was watched by Pointz at Nottingham and Rossiter at Grantham.

The garrison was seething with dissension, and the King's efforts to regulate the disorders he had found there—the place was full of Colonels and General Officers all enjoying such liberal assignments out of the scanty contributions that little was left for the common soldiers—only added to the number of the

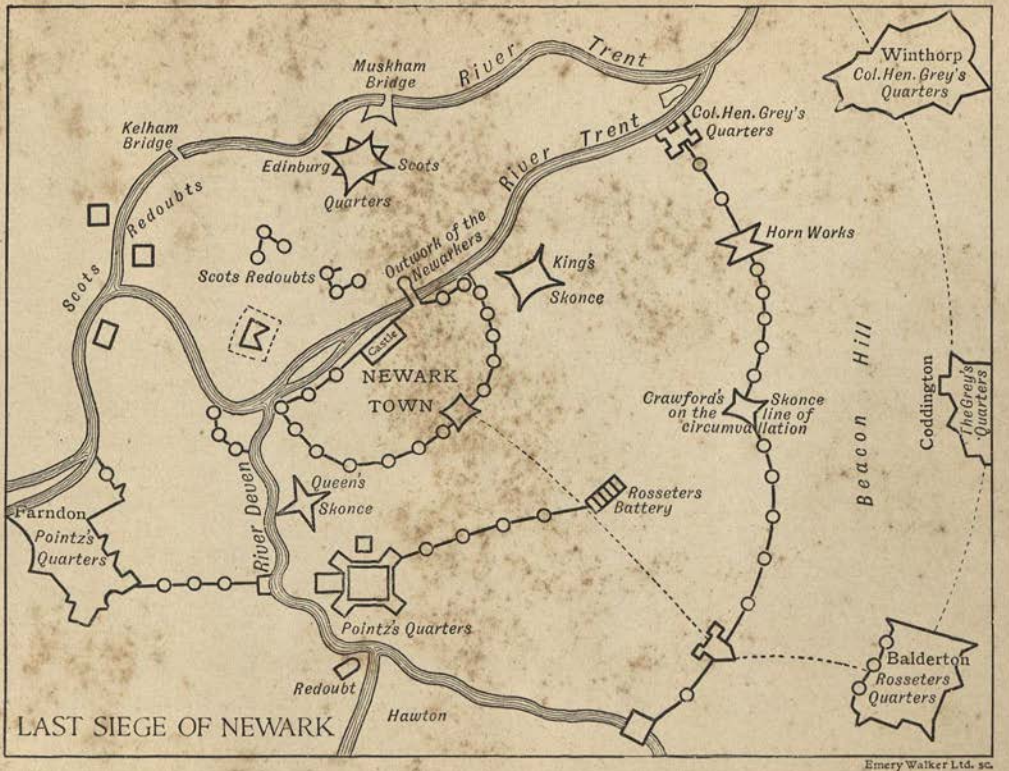
discontented. That is ever the way with losing causes. When unity and singleness of mind are most necessary, personal jealousies are always most rife. Matters were not improved by the appearance on the scene of Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice, who, despite peremptory instructions to the contrary, came to Newark to explain the surrender of Bristol. The King, after listening to their excuses, drew up a declaration absolving Rupert from the charge of disloyalty but not from that of indiscretion. The Prince accepted the rebuke with sullen indignation, and when the King resolved to take the Governorship of Newark Castle out of the hands of Sir Richard Willis and give it to Lord Bellasis, he openly expressed his sympathies with Sir Richard, who refused the appointment of Captain of the Horse Guards offered by Charles to soothe his wounded pride.

All these dissensions and heart-burnings culminated in a painful scene in the Castle on Sunday, October 26, which Clarendon thus describes:—

"Sir Richard Willis appeared very much troubled, and excused the not taking the other command, as a place of too much honour, and that his fortune could not maintain him in that employment; he said that his enemies would triumph at his removal and he should be looked upon as cast out and disgraced. The King replied that he would take care and provide for his support and that a man could not be looked upon as disgraced who was placed so near his person, which he told him he would find to be true when he had thought a little of it.

"So his Majesty went out of his chamber and presently to the church. When he returned from thence, he sat down to dinner; the Lords and other of his servants retiring likewise to their lodgings. Before the King had dined, Sir Richard Willis, with both the Princes, the Lord Gerrard, and about twenty officers of the garrison entered into the presence chamber. Willis addressed himself to the King and told him that what his Majesty had said to him in private was now the public talk of the town and very much to his dishonour. Prince Rupert said that Sir Richard Willis was to be removed from his Governorship for no fault that he had committed but for being his friend. The Lord Gerrard added that it was the plot of the Lord Digby, who was a traytor and he would prove him to be so.

"The King was so surprised with this manner of behaviour, that he rose in some disorder from the table and would have gone



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to his bed-chamber, calling Sir Richard Willis to follow him, who answered aloud that he had received a publick injury and therefore that he expected a publick satisfaction. This with what had passed before so provoked his Majesty that with greater indignation than he was ever seen possessed with, he commanded them to depart from his presence and to come no more into it; and this with such circumstances in his looks and gesture, as well as words, that they appeared no less confounded, and departed the room, ashamed of what they had done; yet as soon as they came to the Governor's House they sounded to horse, intending to be presently gone."

Symonds adds the interesting details that Prince Rupert approached nearer to the King than etiquette permitted, and swaggered out of the room "without reverence and boldly, with his hands at his side," and that when the Prince attacked Digby as the cause of all their distractions, the King retorted, "They are all rogues and rascalls that says soe, and in effect traytors that seeke to dishonour my best subjects."

In the same afternoon the two Princes and twenty-four officers sent in a petition to the King, asking that Sir Richard Willis might be tried by court-martial. If that were refused, they desired "passes for themselves and as many horse as desired to go with them." The petition closed with the hope that his Majesty would not regard this as a mutiny. To which the King replied that "he would not christen it, but it looked very like it." So the passes were made out as desired, and no fewer than two hundred of the little garrison left with the malcontents. First they went to Wiverton, where they cannot have stayed long, because that garrison surrendered in the first week of November; then to Belvoir, whence they wrote to the Parliament asking for safe conduct to go beyond seas. This permission the Parliament was only too willing to grant.

Such was the hopeless plight to which the Royalist cause had fallen, and the King's position in Newark grew hourly more precarious. Pointz and Rossiter began to close in from Nottingham and Grantham respectively. If Charles did not wish to be cooped up, it was high time for him to be gone. So on November 3 he warned Sir Gervase Lucas at Belvoir of his intention to march thither that night. The secret was not known in Newark itself till an hour after the gates were shut. Then, at 10 o'clock, there was a muster in the Market Place and an hour later the

King marched out of Newark in the centre of an escort of from 400 to 500 horse and reached Belvoir at 3 a.m., without meeting opposition on the way. The road, as it happened, was clear, and the enemy's scouts were not moving. The little column kept on the march all that day and pushed vigorously forward. At Burleigh-on-the-hill, near Stamford, they were sighted by the Parliamentary garrison, who sallied out upon the rear of the column, and killed a few of the rearguard files, and in a village eight miles from Northampton the King was so tired that he rested and slept for four hours. The march was resumed at 10 p.m. Daventry was passed before daybreak, and Banbury reached at noon, where a column of horse was in waiting to escort him safely to Oxford. Such was King Charles' last ride from Newark to Oxford, and the haste and secrecy with which it was performed show how desperate was his plight.

When the King had gone, the Parliamentary forces closed in upon Newark, and a Scottish army under General Leslie came down in December and took up position just across the Trent, in the island made by that river and the Devon, between Kelham Bridge and Muskham Bridge. Rossiter was at Balderton, Pointz at Farndon, Henry Gray at Winthorpe and Theo. Gray at Coddington. The investment was complete, but the besiegers took care not to come to too close quarters with the wolf in his lair. The two principal outer defences of the garrison were the King's Sconce, in Northgate, which guarded the north side, and the Queen's Sconce which guarded the south. The besiegers drew a line of circumvallation with redoubts and sconces at short intervals on the east side across the approaches from Sleaford and the South, and just outside this line the farmers pursued their daily work as though nothing unusual were taking place. Indeed, it is said that the kine and sheep grazed on with perfect impunity and that their owners received no damage in respect of them.

A few skirmishes took place, but nothing in the shape of a severe assault, and it was certainly no idle boast on the part of the garrison that they were ready to hold out for many more weeks, when the startling message came from Kelham on May 6 that Charles was there, a prisoner in the hands of the Scots, and that he had given orders for the surrender of Newark. Bellasis obtained honourable terms. The garrison marched out with all the honours of war, but what avail was that when there was no-

where for the garrison to march to? Down from London came the peremptory order that the Castle should be "slighted" and in a few weeks Newark Castle was reduced to its present state of picturesque ruin. One cannot blame the Parliament for making sure that the Royalist stronghold which had given them so much trouble should be in no position to repeat the annoyance, if trouble broke out anew. War is war, and Newark was not vengefully treated. But the story of the country people coming in from the villages round and gleefully taking part in the demolition of the Castle may be dismissed as a Roundhead fable. Only the bitterest partisans living within sight of Newark steeple can have rejoiced as they saw the column of smoke rise from the explosions whereby the proud old Castle was "slighted" and brought low.

Next to the Castle the most interesting relic of the Civil War in Newark is to be seen half a mile out of the town on the road to Nottingham. This is the Queen's Sconce, an outlying redoubt of the Newark garrison, and even now in an admirable state of preservation. Situated on the right bank of the little river Devon, just before its confluence with the Trent, it commanded the approach to Newark along the Fosse Way. On the river side was a smooth glacis, and at each corner of the rectangular earthwork was a rounded bastion, protected by a deep ditch. In the centre was a depression, used doubtless for the store of powder and ball. A companion earthwork, known as the King's Sconce, stood on the northern side of Newark, but this has been completely demolished by the spread of the town. Just outside the south-west bastion of the Queen's Sconce is St. Catherine's Well, to which a curious legend attaches. It is that a certain lady of Newark had two lovers, Sir Guy Saucimer and Sir Everard Bevercotes, and that Sir Guy slew Sir Everard on St. Catherine's eve in a duel on the bank of the Devon. A spring of water gushed forth on the spot where Sir Everard fell; the lady died of grief, and Sir Guy after many years' wanderings in foreign lands, was stricken with leprosy and warned in a dream that the only water which could effect his cure was to be found on the site where his victim fell. So, of course, Sir Guy came home, bathed in the waters of the spring, built a hermitage and a chapel to St. Catherine and lived out the rest of his years as a holy man.

A mile and a half from the Queen's Sconce, higher up the

Devon, is the hamlet of Hawton, which possesses a wonderful Easter Sepulchre in the chancel of the church. The following description is worth quoting :—

"In this chancel occurs some of the richest treatment of stonework of about the first quarter of the 14th century, which can be met with in all England. The great seven-light window of the east end, with the side window and buttresses are in themselves noble conceptions, but the chief beauty is to be found in the interior where the long canopied sedilia on the south side and the splendidly carved Easter Sepulchre combined with a founder's tomb and a doorway into the destroyed chapel on the north side are of surpassing delicacy in the profusion and richness of detailed sculpture. The whole arrangement of the elaborate series of figures in the Easter Sepulchre is both ingenious and telling, and in bygone times must have helped to kindle a vivid faith in the truth of the Resurrection. All the wonderful work of this chancel was well set forth in a series of architectural sketches, elevations and sections, issued in elephant folio by the Cambridge Camden Society in 1844. The whole of the richly wrought work on the north side measures 17 feet in length by 12 feet in height ; there is a facsimile of this in plaster in the mediæval court of the Crystal Palace. Hawton church was restored throughout with some care in the 'Eighties ; but the singular absence of every kind of ornament and colour, as well as of stained glass, imparts to it a cold Puritanical look that must be in complete contrast to the richness of its appearance in mediæval days."

The details of the sculptures are of extraordinary richness. In the four panels below are the Roman sentinels, clad in chain armour and holding elaborately carved shields, fast asleep before the tomb. In the canopied recess above is seen the risen Saviour with Mary Magdalene at his feet. In the smaller recess, on the left, was an inner receptacle in which the Host was placed and kept from Good Friday till Easter morning, when it was carried in state to the High Altar. Above the beautiful canopies is carved a representation of the Ascension, with the Apostles gazing up to heaven, and groups of angels stand by with swinging censers. Most of the heads of the figures have been knocked off, but otherwise the work is in a fine state of preservation. Adjoining the Sepulchre and enclosed in the same sculptured frame is the tomb of the founder of the chancel, Sir Richard

de Compton, cross-kneed and in chain armour, within an arched recess, showing the same rich ornament and crowned with the mutilated finial of a bishop. Next to this is a doorway which gave access to a small chapel, now removed, though its hagioscope still exists in the walling of the tomb recess. The triple sedilia on the other side of the chancel show the same love of profuse detail. Beneath the tower is the tomb of Sir Robert de Compton—the brass, unfortunately, is gone—and near the north door is the tomb of Robert de Gunthorp, with an inscription in Lombardic capitals. Of the great house at Hawton, where first the Comptons and afterwards the Molineux lived, no trace remains.

One other place on the banks of the Devon is well worth a visit. That is Staunton, which lies in the corner where Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire converge. It is five miles by road from Hawton, in a situation as charming as it is inconvenient of approach. The hamlet is naught, but Staunton Hall and Staunton church, side by side in their pleasant grove, perched above the stream at a slight elevation which contrives somehow to command a singularly beautiful and extensive prospect, are full of attractions. Wearing with quiet dignity its great age and steeped in silence, this is just the very spot for an old hall whose owners have dwelt there for long generations and for a church full of their memorials. The hall itself is neither large nor imposing. It is the product of many periods, much added to and altered according to the tastes of successive owners and the changing requirements of their times. It is a two-storeyed house with a large lawn at the back, as you approach it from the churchyard, and good gardens in front with a glorious view over the vale of Belvoir, and a small lake through which the little river Devon runs on its way to Newark. The date 1554 is seen over the porch at the entrance, and it was about then that the big hall was built, once as lofty as the present roof, though now the upper half has been converted into bedrooms. The chief structural changes were made about the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The manor of Staunton has been in the hands of the Staunton family from the Conquest and even before. They held their lands by the tenure of Castle Guard, and a Staunton Tower at Belvoir Castle still commemorates their privilege and their duty. A few other places may make the like boast—for example,

there have been Luttrells at Dunster for a similarly long period —but they are very few. Either families have died out, which has been the usual fate, or they have gone up in the world and the ancient home has become too small for them, or they have sunk and their record is forgotten. As for the Stauntons they appear to have kept a singularly even course, rarely rising to any great distinction, but contriving to maintain their station. Probably the earlier ones, the Sir Maugers and Sir Johns, who gained their knighthoods regularly through the Norman and Plantagenet reigns, were the most prominent of their race. Then followed a long period during which son succeeded father and was gathered in turn to his forefathers without having gained more than local celebrity. The Civil War found a Staunton ready to serve his King. William Staunton, the head of his house, was with Charles I. when he raised his Standard at Nottingham and was promoted Colonel for the part he played at Edgehill. Then he returned home, took an active part in raising a local regiment of 1,200 men and a troop of horse, and bore a hand in all the martial doings round Newark while the war continued. Naturally, the Parliamentarians, when they were besieging Newark early in 1645, took the opportunity of rifling the malignant's home, while the Colonel was cooped up in Newark Castle, and Staunton Hall was sacked and looted. There are bullet holes to be seen to this day in the front door. The place was never garrisoned, because it was not defensible, and therefore the tradition of its having stood a siege is a local exaggeration. What happened was that a strong detachment of Roundheads was quartered at Staunton, to watch the Royalist garrison at Belvoir, and give warning of any attempt to relieve Newark, and the story goes that three hundred of them were quartered in the old Rectory. The Colonel estimated the damage done to the Hall at £2,000, to the woods at £300, and to his household goods at another £300. Colonel Staunton was in Newark at its final surrender, and the triumphant Parliament fined him £1,250 for the share he had taken in the war. He raised half the sum and petitioned for the remission of the remainder, with the result that the total fine was reduced to £828 3*s.* 6*d.* The Colonel did not live to see the glorious Restoration, for he died in 1656 at the age of 48, but it is interesting to note that his widow petitioned Charles II. to nominate her son Ralph to a scholarship at Charterhouse at the next elec-

tion, in consideration of his father's loyalty. The nomination was granted, and young Ralph afterwards became Rector of Wilford, and at his death in 1694 was buried in St. Mary's, Nottingham.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the male line died out in the person of Henry Staunton. His eldest daughter married a Charlton, who lived at the Hall, and their son, Job Staunton Charlton, was Member of Parliament for Newark. He died in 1777 and left no son, and the younger of his two daughters, who died unmarried in 1807, left the Staunton estate to a second cousin, Elizabeth Brough, the wife of a clergyman, the Rev. J. Ashpinshaw. The only stipulation was that Mr. Ashpinshaw should change his name to Staunton, which of course he did, and blossomed forth into a typical pluralist and squarson. Dr. Staunton, as he then became, began by being Rector of St. Peter's, Nottingham, which he held from 1797 to 1814. In 1804 he added the Vicarage of Hinckley and Stoke, which he afterwards resigned in order to become Vicar of Elton. Then he presented himself to Kilvington in 1813 and to Staunton in 1828, was elected Chairman of Quarter Sessions and died in 1851 at the ripe age of 87. Kilvington church, which is only half a mile distant from Staunton church, and quite unneeded, for there are only a few cottages in the parish, was allowed by this greedy pluralist to fall into a ruinous state. He let it be used as a sheep-fold and in 1843 the fabric was offered for sale as building material. But as he omitted to comply with all the legal requirements—there was a signature missing on a certain document—his heirs were called upon to put the church once more into proper repair. Dr. Staunton was succeeded by three of his grandsons in turn, the third of whom, also both squire and rector, died in 1888. Fate has dealt very hardly in the last generation or two with the representatives of this ancient house, and the family history has been a sad one. For some years past Staunton Hall has been let to strangers.

The church, largely rebuilt in 1853, is beautiful without and full of interest within. The gargoyles and sculptured heads remain almost as fresh as when they left the mason's hands, and though the niche over the exquisite north door is empty, the fine tracery is nearly perfect, and the triangular buttresses are singularly light and graceful. The north aisle of the nave

bears the name of the Choir of St. Lawrence, and contains the Staunton tombs. There lie the early Stauntons, soldiers all, in their mail and armour, curious effigies of forgotten days. The floor is paved with ancient Staunton tombstones, the titles of most of them still tolerably decipherable, and the walls of the chancel are covered with memorials of a later date. There is a very early mural tablet with the date of 1512, the script beautifully cut, but it is noticeable that there are no monuments

North Front of Staunton Hall, 1812.
From an engraving by Hay, from a drawing by T. Barber.

to the Stauntons of the seventeenth century. No doubt the explanation is to be found in the impoverishment of the family by the Civil War. The merits of the pluralist Dr. Staunton are not forgotten, though they are not flaunted; those of his curate, who did all the work for fifty years, are cut in modest slate in a tablet on the outside north wall.

But the most unique feature in the church is the old oak rood screen at the entrance to the chancel. It is in wonderful preservation, thanks to the numberless coats of paint which preserved, while they hid, its beauties. When it was carefully cleaned

a few years ago it was discovered to contain a long inscription, the existence of which had remained unsuspected because the spaces between the letters had been filled up with putty and the surface made smooth. Now anyone can read the writing :—

"Pray for the saule of Mayster Symon Yates, Bachelar of Law, born in Newark, Parson of this Church and of Beckyngham, and official of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham, which in his lyf, of his own propere expenses, of his charetie caused this Rode, the tabernacle of our ladie, to be made in the yeare of oure Lord, MCCCCCXIX, on whose saule God have mercy. Amen."

There are not many Post-Reformation screens in England dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Mention may be made of a curious local custom which even yet is occasionally observed. In the old days it was the practice for the village of Staunton to present a new bell rope every three years to Bottesford church, and to receive the old one in exchange. The origin is clear. Staunton used to rely on the bells of Bottesford to give timely warning of any approaching danger from the vale.

Moonrise on the Trent.

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